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Bureau of Land Management & National Park Service

Arizona Strip

September 2002



Management Plans SCOPING REPORT



SCOPING REPORT

FOR

ARIZONA STRIP FIELD OFFICE, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

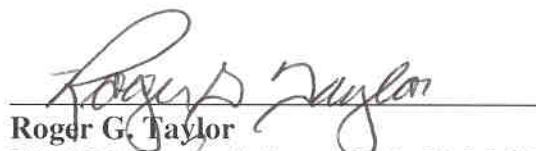
ARIZONA STRIP PLANNING EFFORT;


ARIZONA STRIP RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION


GRAND CANYON-PARASHANT NATIONAL MONUMENT
MANAGEMENT PLAN

VERMILION CLIFFS NATIONAL MONUMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Table of Contents

Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	3
Purpose and Need for the plan.....	3
The Planning Area.....	4
Public Involvement Process.....	5
Notices.....	5
Public Meetings	8
Cooperating Agencies.....	12
Landscape Subcommittee, Arizona Strip Alliance.....	14
Tribal Consultation and Collaboration.....	14
Public Scoping Results.....	15
Scoping Comment Analysis.....	15
Comments Received.....	17
Issues and Concerns.....	17
Issues.....	18
Access.....	18
Wilderness.....	19
Protection of Resources	19
Grazing.....	19
Recreation	19
Remoteness	20
Management Concerns	20
Complexity and Size of Plans	20
Restoration	20
Public Safety	21
Community Involvement	21
Public Issues as Identified from Scoping.....	21
Planning Considerations	44
Valid Existing Management to be Carried Forward	44
Anticipated Decisions	44
Planning Questions to Carry Forward	44
Draft Planning Criteria	52
Special Designations	54
Data Summary	55
Future Steps	63

Planning Schedule	64
Key Contacts	65
References Cited	66

List of Tables

1. Arizona Strip Public Scoping Meetings.....	9
2. Cooperating Agencies	13
3. Meetings with Indian Tribes	15
4. Top 12 Comment Categories	17
5. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.....	55
6. Data Development Summary.....	56
7. Arizona Strip Planning Schedule	64

Appendices

1. Land Use Plan Evaluation
2. Notice of Intent, April 24, 2002
3. Planning Update #1
4. Acronyms and Abbreviations Used

ARIZONA STRIP SCOPING REPORT

Summary

The clearest message from people commenting on all sides of various issues during public scoping was that the Arizona Strip is a beautiful, remote land away from civilization. Time and again public comments expressed a desire to have a place away from cities where they would not see anyone else, where there was no evidence of civilization, where they could recreate in peace, where the resources would be protected, and where their spirit could regenerate away from the noise, smog, and stress of the city.

This appears to be the primary value of the Arizona Strip to the public – its remoteness, beauty, and opportunities for recreation and peace. This is the same message heard during the previous planning effort on the Arizona Strip a decade ago (1992). People like it exactly the way it is. And they prefer it to remain that way.

The planning for the Arizona Strip, which is located north of the Grand Canyon in Arizona, will include a revision of the Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan (RMP, 1992), as well as management plans for the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument (GCPNM) and Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (VCNM).

The main objective for the planning effort is to determine how the Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermilion Cliffs National Monuments will be managed for at least the next 15-20 years. Coincident with management of the monuments are the changes that will occur on the public lands adjacent to the monuments. A revision to the Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan should bring forward those decisions made in previous planning documents that are still valid while recognizing any changes necessary because of monument designation and increasing public use. Public comments reaffirmed the importance of these new national monuments, particularly as they can protect the resources for which the monuments were designated, as well as human uses of these beautiful, remote landscapes.

The Notice of Intent initiating the present planning effort was published in the Federal Register on April 24, 2002. It will take approximately three years to complete the three separate management plans and three Records of Decision.

One scoping process will cover the entire planning effort. The initial public scoping period was from April 24, 2002 to July 31, 2002. However, all 2,219 comments received by August 30, 2002, were incorporated into the comment analysis and summarized in this scoping report. Public comments are encouraged throughout the entire planning process and will be accepted until the documents are written.

Main issues and concerns identified by the public, listed in order, were transportation and access (including ATV use), wilderness, protection of resources, meaningful involvement by the public in the planning process, livestock grazing, recreation, and remoteness.

A citizen's proposal was received from the Arizona Wilderness Coalition advocating additional wilderness areas covering a large portion of the Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermilion Cliffs National Monuments. Major access roads are cherry-stemmed between these proposed wilderness units. Additional wilderness proposals for areas outside the monuments on the Arizona Strip are also expected. The coalition stated that the main reason for the wilderness proposals was the ultimate protection of the resources.

The primary management concern is completing three management plans on time and within budget using a collaborative approach across a large landscape.

Also of concern is the rapidly growing local population east of Mesquite, Nevada, and in Utah around St. George, Hurricane, Kanab, Page, and Big Water. Increasing population equates to increasing uses on the public lands nearby. The Arizona Strip planning effort must accommodate additional uses while still preserving the remote and undeveloped character, the wild natural beauty, and the natural and cultural resources on the Arizona Strip.

The overriding goal for the planning effort is that planning on the Arizona Strip will be open and inclusive – there will be no surprises for the public, groups, agencies, communities, counties, or tribes when the written documents are available. The planning effort will be conducted cooperatively with counties, tribes, federal, and state agencies.

ARIZONA STRIP SCOPING REPORT

Introduction

Purpose and Need for the plan

The purpose of the Arizona Strip planning effort is to establish guidance, objectives, policies and management actions for the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and the remaining public lands of the Arizona Strip District. The plans will address or resolve issues summarized in this scoping report within the three areas and in areas outside their boundaries that are identified through agency, interagency and public scoping efforts.

The plan will outline:

- \$ The current management situation
- \$ Desired future conditions to be maintained or achieved
- \$ Management actions necessary to achieve objectives
- \$ Schedule and cost estimate for implementing the actions for achieving those goals

Through these actions, the monuments will be managed according to the intent of both Presidential Proclamations.

The plan will address and integrate, to the extent possible, all existing Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and National Park Service (NPS) management plans related to the management of the lands in or adjacent to the Arizona Strip District including the newly established National Monuments. These include, but are not limited to, general management plans, resource management plans, fire management plans, and recreation management plans.

In addition to the purposes described above, the plan will also fulfill the following needs and obligations set forth by the Presidential Proclamations, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the National Park Service Organic Act, the Lake Mead NRA Enabling Legislation, relevant federal law and executive orders (including wilderness legislation), and the NPS and BLM management policies.

A Land Use Planning Evaluation was conducted in September of 2000. This evaluation covered Arizona Strip BLM administered lands as well as lands administered by Lake Mead NRA in Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument. Valid decisions from this effort will be brought forward into the planning effort (see Appendix 1).

The Planning Area

The 3 million-acre planning area within the Arizona Strip is isolated from the rest of Arizona by the deep canyons of the Colorado River (see Figure 1). It encompasses the northern portions of Mohave and Coconino counties. Geographically, culturally and economically, the planning areas are linked with communities in both northern Arizona and southern Utah. The only permanent residents of the Arizona Strip live in the small communities of Colorado City and Fredonia. There are also residents near the Utah and Nevada borders at Littlefield and Page, and along Highway 89A in House Rock Valley.

The principal industries using public lands within the planning area are ranching and tourism. Livestock grazing has been and continues to be a major use in this area since the 1880s. More than 135 ranchers graze 23,485 cattle annually in this area.

The planning area provides a wide array of dispersed recreation opportunities, ranging from sightseeing to wilderness backpacking. The primary attraction in the planning area is the opportunity to engage in recreational activities in remote, unregulated settings. Public recreation use has slowly but steadily increased over the last 10 years, primarily in several more popular destination locations.

The Grand Canyon limits accessibility from the south, and unpaved roads inhibit use from the north. Spectacular scenic vistas are common and remoteness and solitude can be found among rough canyons and occasional stands of ponderosa pine.

Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument

The GCPNM encompasses a little more than 1 million acres of federal lands in the northwest corner of Mohave County, including 200,000 acres of the NPS Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Grand Canyon National Park borders the monument to the south, Nevada borders it to the west, and lands managed by the BLM Arizona Strip Field Office border to the north and east.

The GCPNM Proclamation directs BLM and NPS to manage the monument cooperatively. The staff of the monument is a combination NPS and BLM employees directed by a BLM manager. The monument contains no paved roads, services or communities. The nearest communities are Littlefield, Fredonia, and Colorado City in Arizona, Bunkerville and Mesquite in Nevada, and St. George in Utah.

Approximately 94,943 acres within the monument have been designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and are under BLM management. Most of Grand Canyon NP and some areas within Lake Mead NRA contiguous to the monument are administratively recommended for wilderness. Interim wilderness management plans guide management decisions in these areas pending legislative action by Congress.

Vermilion Cliffs National Monument

The VCNM contains about 280,324 acres of federal lands in the extreme northern portion of Coconino County. It is adjacent to the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and contiguous to both Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest. While no communities exist within the monument, several small residential/commercial areas lie along the monument boundary at the foot of the Vermilion Cliffs along U.S. Highway 89A. The nearest larger communities are Page and Fredonia in Arizona, and Kanab, Utah.

While U.S. Highway 89A provides excellent access along the southern boundary of the monument, much of the monument's landscape of steep cliffs, deep canyons and loose sand make vehicular access challenging. Most of the monument is extremely remote. Spectacular scenic vistas are common from the rims of the Paria Plateau. Congress, as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, designated approximately 91,000 acres within the monument. Another 21,000 acres of the same statutory area lie outside the monument in Utah. Both portions of the wilderness are managed by BLM. Portions of Glen Canyon NRA contiguous to the monument are administratively recommended for wilderness. Interim wilderness management plans guide management decisions in these areas pending legislative action by Congress.

Public Involvement Process

Notices (NOI, legal notices, news media, posters, flyers, Web)

The Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on April 24, 2002 (see Appendix 1).

Newspaper legal notices and articles on the Public Scoping Meetings were published in the following newspapers:

- Arizona Daily Sun, Flagstaff, Arizona (May 12, 2002)
- Arizona Republic, Phoenix, Arizona (May 13, 2002)
- Desert Valley Times, Mesquite, Arizona (May 13 and 16, 2002)
- Kingman Daily Miner, Kingman, Arizona (May 12 and June 5, 2002)
- Lake Powell Chronicle, Page, Arizona (May 15, 2002)
- Las Vegas Sun, Las Vegas, Nevada (May 28, 2002)
- Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News, Salt Lake City, Utah (May 23, 2002)
- Southern Utah News, Kanab, Utah (May 15, 2002)
- The Spectrum, St. George, Utah (May 3, 10, 12, 26, and July 30, 2002)
- The Valley Journal, Mesquite, Nevada (May 10, 2002)

Internet posting of the Public Scoping meeting schedule was made on May 10, 2002 at www.az.blm.gov, Arizona Strip Field Office, Planning.

Flyers were posted in the following communities on May 8-13, 2002:

St. George Meeting

St. George

- Public Library
- City Offices and Post Offices
- BLM Interagency Office
- Grand Canyon Trust Office
- Harmons, Lins Market, Smiths, Albertsons
- Outdoor Outlet

Ivins

- Art Gallery at Kayenta
- Post Office and City offices

Shivwits

- Tribal Building

Santa Clara

- Post Office and City Offices

Washington

- Albertsons, Nissons Foodtown, Nissons Market
- Post Office and City Offices

Hurricane

- Lins Market bulletin board
- Chevron and Hurst Ace Hardware
- Post Office and Museum
- Garden Café (by Chums)
- Graff Mercantile

La Verkin

- Post Office
- Chevron
- Sunrise Market and Farmers Market

Virgin

- Post Office

Springdale

- Post Office and City Offices
- Zion NP and Visitor Center

Toquerville

- Post Office

Leeds

- Post Office and City Offices

Fredonia Meeting

Kanab

- Glaziers Groceries and Honeys IGA store
- Kanab Texaco and Willow Creek Books
- Escobars, Houstons Trails End Restaurant, Rocking V Café, and Vermilion Café
- Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Office, Kanab BLM Field Office

- City Library and Post Office
- Fredonia
 - City Offices and Post Office
 - Forest Service Office
- Outlying Areas
 - Jacob Lake
 - Service Station at Pipe Springs
 - Pipe Spring Visitor Center
 - Kaibab Paiute Tribal Headquarters

Page Meeting

- Page
 - Post Office and City Offices
 - Food stores
 - Glen Canyon NRA Visitor's Center
- Big Water
 - Post Office and City Offices
- Paria Contact Station (BLM)
- Marble Canyon
- Vermilion Cliffs
- Cliff Dwellers

Beaver Dam Meeting

- Beaver Dam
 - Elementary School
 - Sheriffs Office and Post Office
 - The Dam Market
- Littlefield
 - Community College
- Mesquite
 - City Offices and Post Office
 - Smiths
- Bunkerville
 - Post Office and courthouse
 - Community Center

Colorado City Meeting

- Post Office and Town Hall
- Service stations at Apple Valley and Colorado City
- Mohave Community College

Finally, 310 flyers for the Beaver Dam Public Scoping Meeting were sent home in the school information packets of all elementary age school children from the Arizona communities of Beaver Dam, Scenic, and Littlefield on May 22, 2002.

Public Meetings

The Arizona Strip conducted a series of informal open house meetings in 11 communities (see Table 1).

The meetings were held to gather information from the public on the future management of these areas. In addition, the public was asked questions on what they valued about these lands, what kinds of activities or uses were important to them, and how they wanted to see the land managed (see Appendix 2).

The open house meeting format allowed interested individuals to attend anytime from 4-7 p.m. (local time). Members of the public were greeted as they came in the door, asked to sign in, and invited to see a 10-minute planning video introducing them to the Arizona Strip and the current planning effort. In an adjacent room a group of 8-12 NPS and BLM managers and resource specialists were available to speak one-on-one with the public and to answer questions. There were three “stations” with GIS generated maps on foam core representing the three geographic zones of the planning effort: GCPNM, VCNM, and the Arizona Strip Public Domain (non-monument lands). Each respective manager was placed in a station to answer specific questions about that area or monument. A separate table held 8 ½ by 11" maps of the Arizona Strip, Planning Updates with the scoping questions, and proclamations for both monuments. Another table was set in a prominent location with pens, more Planning Updates with the scoping questions, and a metal basket for scoping comments to encourage people to leave written comments.

At the end of each meeting, the scoping team debriefed. At this time they were able to:

- Comment on what worked well
- Make recommendations to improve future meetings
- Compare main points of conversation and issues brought up during the evening

Recommended changes from these debriefing sessions were instituted immediately for the next meeting. This enabled the team to set up the comment table to encourage written comments during the meetings, for instance. This comment table worked very well at the large meeting in Flagstaff.

Changes were made regarding the placement of the various “stations” according to the location of the meeting. Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument was located prominently on the right side as members of the public entered the room when the meetings were held in the western end of the Arizona Strip, for example. At the Page meeting, the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument was highlighted in the prominent location just as people entered the room.

The informal one-on-one open house worked well. Many people came to the open house and stayed for 2-3 hours, and some stayed the entire time. They looked at the maps and talked to various managers or resource specialists. It enabled a two way learning process to take place -- Scoping Team members learned more about the Arizona Strip and the public’s concerns, and the public learned more about BLM and NPS constraints.

One or two people were upset that there was not a formal “hearing.” One gentleman in Flagstaff went so far as to say, “That’s not legal.” An effort was then made to direct that individual to one of the managers so they could express concerns one-on-one.

Table 1. Arizona Strip Public Scoping Meetings

Date	Location	Number of attendees	Number of Comments
May 28, 2002 (Tuesday)	Beaver Dam, AZ	17	0
May 29, 2002 (Wednesday)	St. George, UT	47	7
May 30, 2002 (Thursday)	Colorado City, AZ	27	2
May 31, 2002 (Friday)	Fredonia, AZ	23	0
June 3, 2002 (Monday)	Page, AZ	25	2
June 4, 2002 (Tuesday)	Flagstaff, AZ	176	33
June 5, 2002 (Wednesday)	Phoenix, AZ	37	5
June 6, 2002 (Thursday)	Kingman, AZ	33	2
June 10, 2002 (Monday)	Salt Lake City, UT	20	2
June 12, 2002 (Wednesday)	Las Vegas, NV	39	1
July 22, 2002 (Monday)	Peach Springs, AZ	17	0

These were some of the issues discussed at the public scoping meetings:

- 1) Preservation of the new national monument resources and areas.
- 2) Continued use of existing roads and trails. There was also the flip-side argument, that only roads that were absolutely necessary are open, and the rest should be closed.
- 3) Protect the greater Grand Canyon region.
- 4) Continued use of existing air strips on the Arizona Strip and air space to access them.
- 5) Continued use of single trails for motorcycle rallies and individual use. There were also numerous comments from individuals expressing their desire that no or very limited motorcycle or ATV use be allowed.
- 6) Continued hunting on the Arizona Strip, particularly for big game animals.
- 7) Maintain the wild character of the non-monument lands.
- 8) Keep wildlife corridors across the Arizona Strip intact.
- 9) Develop a Springs Management Plan that includes restoration monitoring.
- 10) Oppose land exchanges that increase development potential on or near monuments.
- 11) Create a transportation plan that is consistent with the proclamations, including preservation of resources and objects identified in the proclamations.
- 12) Protect biological hotspots, such as springs, wildlife corridors, and old growth forests.
- 13) Adhere to the Endangered Species Act.
- 14) Continued use of recreational vehicles on public lands, such as motorcycles, ATVs and rock crawlers. There were numerous comments from individuals expressing their desire that no or very limited motorcycle or ATV use be allowed.

- 15) Travel routes between communities of Scenic and Beaver Dam/Littlefield need to be considered in the plan. Existing routes are not safe. Only option is to cross BLM administered land.
- 16) Can BLM land be purchased or leased? What lands are available for sale, exchange, or lease?
- 17) Concern over diminishment of private property rights. How will plan affect private property?
- 18) Public lands are over-grazed, cattle should not be allowed to graze any longer on public lands. They cause erosion, denude the landscape, invite weeds, and are visually unappealing.
- 19) No development in the Monuments
- 20) Need more visitor services across the Strip.
- 21) Provide any necessary visitor services outside the Monument (PARA).
- 22) Don't advertise area and attract more people; remoteness is most important resource.
- 23) Designate as much wilderness as possible.
- 24) Designate no wilderness.
- 25) Increased protection of natural and cultural resources (more specific than (1))
- 26) Protect recreational values
- 27) Protect wilderness and remoteness values
- 28) Appropriate restoration of degraded ecosystems, especially due to overgrazing, fire suppression, or unauthorized roads
- 29) Appropriate restoration of fire suppression activities should occur.
- 30) Appropriate restoration of unauthorized roads should occur.
- 31) Allow traditional uses to continue (grazing, hunting)
- 32) Curtail all grazing
- 33) Citizen interest in being more involved with planning process

Community Based Partnership and Stewardship Workshops

Before the Notice of Intent was published on April 24, 2002, the Arizona Strip was able to conduct several of the Partnership Series three-day workshops on Community Based Partnership. These were held in May of 2001 in St. George, Utah, in Kaibab Village, Arizona in late January and early February of 2002, and in St. George, Utah in March of 2002.

Under a separate contract, James Kent Associates also conducted abbreviated versions of this workshop entitled Community Based Stewardship. These were on Friday evening and all day Saturday at St. George, Utah in November of 2001 and at Page, Arizona in February of 2002.

Some of the main lessons learned from these workshops were:

- 1) People were concerned about public lands but did not attend unless they were already negatively impacted by land management decision(s).
- 2) The Arizona Strip is too large a geographic area to have a single community.
- 3) The government is going to do what it wants to do anyway.

It was difficult to get local participants to attend the workshops. The workshops at Kaibab Village and Page, Arizona, had participants already negatively impacted by other BLM planning efforts. Efforts were made to focus attention on the Arizona Strip planning effort and the opportunity to make a difference early in planning.

Overall, participants liked the principles of Community Based Partnership and Stewardship. Following the Kaibab Village workshop a “community based” organization called the Color Country Ranchers was formed using information from the workshop. The group’s efforts are focused in southern Utah.

Discovery Process (James Kent Associates)

In October and December of 2001, staff from James Kent Associates, in combination with some of the staff from the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and the Arizona Strip, worked out of St. George and Kanab, Utah, respectively. The St. George group worked the western half of the Arizona Strip covering the communities of Mesquite, Nevada; Beaver Dam, Littlefield, Colorado City, and Scenic, Arizona; and St. George, Hurricane, Virgin, La Verkin, Toquerville, and Washington, Utah. The Kanab group covered the eastern half of the Arizona Strip including the communities of Colorado City, Fredonia, Page, Marble Canyon, Vermilion Cliffs, and Jacob Lake, Arizona; and Kanab, Hildale, and Big Water, Utah.

Using the Discovery Process, a tool developed by James Kent Associates, staff went into the communities and listened at the gathering places to see what was being said about issues. They also contacted community members to see whom their communicators, gatekeepers, and caretakers were. Staff told people they were trying to find out what the issues and concerns the communities had with the management or the resources of the Arizona Strip.

In general, community members seemed grateful they were being asked for their opinion. Planning staff believes it was a positive effort that should be continued.

Out of this work came several names of people who were interested in, and later attended, the upcoming Community Based Partnership and Stewardship workshops.

Some of the most critical issues to come out of this work were:

- 1) Recognition that the State of Nevada may require pavement of gravel roads in Clark County, some of which lead directly to the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, because of diminishing Air Quality.
- 2) Local ranchers on the Arizona Strip frequently assist stranded travelers. Their primary concern was that this is increasing as more and more unprepared people venture out onto the Strip.

Public Scoping Meetings

Cooperating Agencies

Letters were sent to tribes, counties, communities, and federal and state agencies in the Arizona Strip region in early July inviting them to be a Cooperating Agency. At the present time, four counties, one state agency, one federal agency, and two tribes have requested cooperating agency status on the Arizona Strip planning effort (see Table 2).

Arizona State Land Department also requested Cooperating Agency status, but it later rescinded that request because of lack of staff and budget to participate effectively.

Both the Hopi and Kaibab Paiute tribes may also desire cooperating agency status. The Hopi Tribe formally requested cooperating agency status in writing, but conversations with staff since that time indicate that they, too, may not have the staff or resources to fully participate. The Kaibab Paiute Tribe has only recently verbally requested cooperating agency status. They wish to “sit at the table” on the Arizona Strip plan and have been corresponding with the Secretary of Interior on this topic for several years.

Four counties also may desire cooperating agency status. Draft MOUs have recently been completed by Coconino and Mohave counties but have not yet been reviewed by BLM. Washington and Kane counties have only recently verbally indicated that they also wish to participate as cooperating agencies.

The Arizona Ecological Services Field Office of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has also formally requested cooperating agency status. From discussions with their staff, it appears they are only interested in the Arizona Strip planning effort. No MOU has yet been drafted.

Arizona Game and Fish Department also requested cooperating agency status. They are investigating whether it will be prudent to tier off an existing BLM and Game and Fish MOU (1987) for this effort. Their interest is statewide.

Kaibab National Forest also looked into cooperative agency status for the Arizona Strip planning effort. They decided they would remain a consulting agency, instead.

Table 2. Cooperating Agencies: Arizona Strip Field Office

Agency	Address	Contact	Expertise/provide	MOU
US Fish & Wildlife Service,	AZ Ecological Services Field Office 2321 W. Royal Palm Rd,#103 Phoenix, AZ 85021-4951	Bill Austin (928) 226-0714 Email Bill_Austin@fws.gov Allen Taylor Email Allen_Taylor@fws.gov (928) 226-8002 Steven Spangle (928) 226-0250	Wildlife	AZ930?
AZ Game and Fish Dept.	2221 W. Greenway Rd Phoenix, AZ 85023-4399	John Kennedy, POC (602) 942-3000 Bob Broscheid (602) 789-3605 Email bbroscheid@gf.state.az.us	Wildlife	AZ930? Tier off Existing BLM/GF MOU?
Mohave County	PO Box 7000 Kingman, AZ 86402-7000	Chris Ballard (928) 757-0903 Christine.Ballard@co.mohave.az.us	Transportation, socioeconomic	Draft MOU
Coconino County	2500 N. Fort Valley Rd, Flagstaff, AZ 86001	Bill Towler, Director (928) 226-2700 btowler@co.coconino.az.us	Transportation, socioeconomic, public safety	Draft MOU
Kane County	76 N. Main Kanab, UT 84741	Karen Glazier (435) 644-4929 Email commiss@kanab.net	??	??
Washington County	197 E. Tabernacle St. George, UT 84770	Alan Gardner (435) 634-5700	??	??
Hopi Tribe	PO Box 123 Kykotsmovi, AZ 86039	Leigh Kuwanwisiwma (928) 734-2441	Native American Information,TCP	???
Kaibab Paiute Tribe	HC 65 PO Box 2 Fredonia, AZ 86022	Carmen Bradley, Chairperson (928) 643-7245	Native American Information, TCP	???

Landscape Subcommittee, Arizona Strip Alliance

The Arizona Strip Alliance was formed in the late 1990s when discussion first surfaced about potential new monuments on the Arizona Strip. Local communities, counties, and agency representatives from southern Utah and northern Arizona joined together to plan on a regional scale. The Landscape Subcommittee of the Arizona Strip Alliance is a working subcommittee that meets bimonthly to discuss planning issues Arizona Strip region. The Landscape Subcommittee is one of several subcommittees that meet on a regular basis to share resources, information, and discuss future joint courses of action.

Membership on the subcommittee is open to federal and state agency representatives, community, tribal, and county planners and representatives. In this regional meeting, planning issues larger than those faced by single agencies or communities alone can be discussed. The Arizona Strip BLM participates on this subcommittee.

Tribal Consultation and Collaboration

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and Executive Order 13007, the BLM initiated consultation in February, 2002 with 25 tribes on and near the Arizona Strip concerning the Arizona Strip planning effort. All tribes and Navajo Chapters were contacted both by letter and telephone calls. Each of the consulted American Indian tribes and Navajo Chapters were offered an opportunity to meet with BLM representatives at their tribal headquarters to discuss tribal concerns and to receive information regarding the Arizona Strip planning effort. At these tribal meetings, planning staff offered to meet with staff as well as community members to explain the planning process and how it might affect them. Each group was extended an invitation for field trips to visit the monuments.

The meetings with the tribal councils had three purposes:

- 1) to describe the proposed land use plan revisions,
- 2) to discuss planning schedules, and
- 3) to gather comments focusing on traditional cultural issues as they relate to the planning process.

Participation by the Field Manager, Lake Mead Superintendent, and Monument Managers at these meetings was an important component in reaffirming the government-to-government relationship between the Arizona Strip and American Indian Tribal Governments.

Tribes were encouraged to participate in the public scoping process of the upcoming planning effort by sending in written comments or encouraging tribal members to send in comments. The new Native American Coordinator for the Arizona Strip was introduced and informal unwritten communication was encouraged to identify any Traditional Cultural Places and sensitive or traditional use areas.

No written or unwritten informal comments were received from any of the tribes or tribal members during the scoping period. Written comments were received from the Kaibab Paiute Tribe on September 19, 2002. These comments were not incorporated into the scoping comment analysis.

Table 3. Meetings with Indian Tribes

DATE	TRIBE	LOCATION
August 2001	Paiute Tribe of Utah Council	Cedar City, Utah
Jan 9, 2002	Shivwits Band Council	Shivwits Indian Reservation
Feb 20, 2002	Hopi Tribe	Kykotsmovi, Arizona
Feb 21, 2002	Kaibab Band of Southern Paiutes	Pipe Springs, Arizona
Mar 12, 2002	Moapa Paiute Tribe	Moapa, Nevada
April 12, 2002	Hualapai Tribe	Peach Springs, Arizona
May 14, 2002	Kanosh Band	Kanosh, Utah
May 15, 2002	Cedar Band	Cedar City, Utah
May 28, 2002	Koosharem Band	Cedar City, Utah
July 22, 2002	Hualapai Open House	Peach Springs Community Bldg.

Public Scoping Results

Scoping Comment Analysis

The scoping comments were received as a result of the public scoping meetings, the website, other agency and organization websites, and newspaper articles. Comments also resulted from placing the Planning Update #1, with the scoping questions, at the visitor's centers in the Interagency office in St. George, the Fredonia Welcome Center, the Kanab Visitor's Center, and various motorcycle and bike shops in St. George, Utah. Comments were received via email, mail or in person.

Comments received were copied so that a working copy, a FOIA copy, and the original were placed in separate files. Two staff members then reviewed and highlighted each working copy comment letter for substantive comments. These substantive comments were then assigned the most appropriate category from this list:

SCOPING COMMENT CATEGORIES

AIR	Air Quality
ACEC	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
ALT	Alternative
BIOL	Biological Resources
BISC	Biological Soil Crusts
CULT	Archaeological and Historic Resources
COM	Community Concerns
DAT	Data Gaps/Needs
ECOL	Ecological Systems
Facilities	ADFA Administrative Facilities VIFA Visitor Facilities
FWL	Fish and Wildlife
FIRE	Fire (wild and prescribed)
FOR	Forestry Products
GEOL	Geologic Resources
GEN	General
GRAZ	Livestock Grazing
HAZ	Hazardous Waste
HYDR	Hydrology
INED	Interpretive/education
LAND	Lands and Realty
LARE	Laws and Regulations
MINE	Minerals
MONR	Monument Resources (general)
MUL	Multiple Uses
NAT	Native American Concerns (including TCP)
NONE	Letter has no substantive comment
NEPA	NEPA and Planning
O & G	Oil and Gas
PALO	Paleontological Resources
QUIE	Natural Quiet
RIP	Riparian Areas
REC	Recreation
REMO	Remote
RES	Restoration
SAFE	Public Safety
SOC	Socioeconomic
SCI	Science and Research
SOIL	Soils
SPIR	Spiritual
STAN	Standards and Guidelines
STAT	Status Quo (no change)
STRE	Strip Resources
TEA	Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Animal Species
TEP	Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive Plant Species
TRAD	Traditional Uses
TRAN	Transportation and Access
VEG	Vegetation
VER	Visitor Experience
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WAT	Water/Water Quality
WATD	Water Development
WATS	Watershed
WEED	Noxious Weeds
WHB	Wild Horse and Burro
WILD	Wilderness
WSR	Wild and Scenic Rivers

This analysis was subjective. In order to be as objective as possible, the staff calibrated with each other to ensure each was conducting the analysis consistently.

Once comments were categorized, they were placed by category into an Excel database. The specific comment categories were transferred to a shared Word file and resource specialists reviewed and summarized the comments. (Those summaries can be found in this document under “Public Issues.”)

Comments Received

A total of 2,219 comments were received, of which 1,600 were form letters from an email posted on The Wilderness Society website (<http://www.wilderness.org/>). Communications from this website came from all across the country and from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Russia, Australia, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, and Mexico. There is national and international concern about the Arizona Strip and the new monuments, regardless whether the individual has visited or is yet to visit or may never visit Grand Canyon-Parashant or Vermilion Cliffs National Monuments.

Table 3. Top 12 Comment Categories*

Category	Number of Comments
Transportation and Access	2,071
Wilderness	1,838
General	1,811
Monument Resources	1,749
Biological Resources	1,649
NEPA and Planning	1,612
Livestock Grazing	302
Recreation	247
Fish and Wildlife	139
Archeological and Historic Resources	134
Arizona Strip Resources	128
Remoteness	103

*Includes 1,600 form letters from The Wilderness Society webpage

Issues and Concerns

Based on public comments, interagency and staff discussions, and information available on the resources of the Arizona Strip at the present time, the following are the planning issues and management concerns to be addressed on the Arizona Strip planning effort.

Issues

As defined in the Arizona Strip Preplan (2001), an issue is a matter of wide public concern over resource management problems that prevent BLM from fulfilling its multiple use mission. This usually means that one or more individual or group is interested in a resource or land use on public land, that each may have different values for the resource, and that there are different alternatives for resolving the issue. They may be identified by local, state or national needs or may reflect conditions specific to the Arizona Strip.

In the Preplan (2001), the following preliminary issues were identified by BLM and NPS staff based on past meetings or discussions with other individuals, agency personnel, user or advocate groups, and resource information and data:

1. Access
2. Restoration
3. Remoteness
4. Community Support

With additional information from the public and from organizations, the issues to be addressed in the Arizona Strip planning effort are:

1. Transportation/Access
2. Wilderness
3. Protection of Resources
4. Livestock Grazing
5. Recreation

The following paragraphs discuss each of the issues for the planning effort.

1. Transportation/Access

The public agrees that this is the major issue to be addressed in the Arizona Strip planning effort. In fact, based on information from individuals and organizations during scoping, access is a much larger issue than previously thought. This issue includes ATV use. And the access issue also affects most of the other listed issues below: wilderness, protection of resources, and future uses.

To assist in addressing the issue, the BLM and NPS are currently conducting baseline GPS inventory of the routes on the Arizona Strip. The route inventories for GCPNM and VCNM will be completed to use in the planning effort. But the routes on the ASFO lands between the monuments will probably not be completed, unless additional budget and staff become available.

2. Wilderness

The next major issue to be addressed in the plan is wilderness. The public is concerned about retaining the remote, isolated, and undeveloped character of the Arizona Strip. Some see wilderness as the ultimate way to protect resources. Using wilderness as one of the management options available for addressing these issues will be one of the major efforts on the plan.

In addition, a citizen's proposal for additional wilderness on the Arizona Strip was received as part of the scoping comments.

3. Protection of Resources

The third major issue to be addressed in the plan is protection of the natural and cultural resources. The public particularly desired protection of the resources identified in the Proclamations for both monuments, including but not limited to archaeological and historical sites, paleontological localities and fossils, wildlife, threatened and endangered plant and animal species, air quality, water quality, soils, remoteness, traditional use areas, sacred places, geology, and vegetation.

The overall concern to be addressed under this issue is the general health of the landscape. Some of the resource use comments received during public scoping were polarized on what should be permitted and allowable uses. But nearly all agreed that uses such as livestock grazing, mining or recreation should continue so long as resource values were not degraded or were restored.

The Restoration issue identified in the Preplan (2001) can be viewed as one-way to achieve land health and protection of the resources.

A possible approach to effectively managing landscape health is an eco-region approach, which will be investigated during the planning effort. Scientific research that furthers understanding of the Arizona Strip will be integrated into the plan whenever possible. An adaptive management approach will be incorporated into the plan so that as further understanding of the resources becomes available, their management and protection may be improved.

4. Grazing

Public concern regarding livestock on the public lands elevated this to an issue in the plan. All sides of this issue were represented in the scoping comments from continuing present uses to eliminating livestock grazing entirely. All land uses on the Arizona Strip, including livestock grazing, need to be incorporated into the concept of overall landscape health.

5. Recreation

Recreational use of the Arizona Strip is also an issue. Increasing use is expected to occur throughout the life of the plan as the monuments attract more visitors and as the local

communities and the entire western United States continue to grow. The main polarizing recreational activity is ATV use on public lands.

The types of recreational use available and sought on the Arizona Strip will be based upon access, management, and future conditions of the resources here and in surrounding areas.

Use of the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) will be pursued in the planning effort. A zoning concept will be pursued in the plan to manage the landscape so that visitors have the kind of experience they are expecting.

6. Remoteness

The final issue is remoteness and the methods for obtaining or keeping it. Remoteness was identified in the Preparation Plan (2001) as an issue. It remains for the planning effort after public scoping. Remoteness is inextricably linked with the access and wilderness issues on the planning effort.

The remoteness of the Arizona Strip was recognized in most comments as one of the most important characteristics of this landscape. It will be considered as planning progresses.

Management Concerns

A management concern, as defined by the Arizona Strip Preparation Plan (2001) is “a topic or point of dispute that involves a resource management activity or land use. While some concerns overlap issues, a management concern is generally more important to an individual or a few individuals, as opposed to a planning issue which has more widespread point of conflict.”

1. Complexity and size of the plans

The primary management concern is successful completion of three separate plans within the 3-year timeframe. The planning effort covers approximately 3.1 million acres. One-third of the area, the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, must meet both BLM and NPS planning mandates. Two national monuments are within the planning area. At least seven entities will be Cooperating Agencies and the planning effort will be done with a collaborative process involving other individuals, agencies, organizations and groups.

2. Restoration

The Mt. Trumbull Restoration Project is an ongoing research project conducted by BLM, Arizona Game and Fish, and Northern Arizona University. This project was initiated in 1995 and is focused on restoring the ponderosa pine forest and ecosystem between the Mt. Trumbull and Mt. Logan Wilderness Areas.

Scoping comments revealed that restoration of the ponderosa pine forest is not an issue with the public. Protection of the resources in the monuments and on the Arizona Strip, however, is an

issue. Restoration will become one potential tool to use to restore ecosystem health and protect resources and will be addressed in the plan.

Management concern is about continuing the Mt. Trumbull research on a long-term basis and expanding the restoration into other vegetation zones, such as pinyon-juniper. Future scientific research and adaptive management may provide guidance for future restoration approaches and management of these landscapes.

3. Public safety

Another concern is about general public safety on the Arizona Strip. Use of the ROS will assist in guiding appropriate placement of visitor information and signs.

4. Education and Interpretation

In order to assist the BLM and NPS in protecting resources and providing visitor safety, interpretation and education will be an integral part of the plan and the resulting implementation plans. The challenge will be to remain within the ROS guidelines while providing sufficient visitor education and information.

5. Community Involvement

Community Support was identified as an issue in the Preparation Plan (2001). But it was not a public scoping issue. It will be carried forward into the planning effort as a management concern.

The planning effort is building upon the excellent relationships with communities, individuals, and groups the Arizona Strip had in the past. During planning these relationships will be strengthened through the Cooperating Agency process and by continuing to involve communities, organizations, and individuals in managing the Arizona Strip. Successful public land management will depend more and more on effective relationships with people using those lands as populations in the West continue to grow and the public lands become more valued for their open space and resources.

Public Issues as Identified from Scoping

For the most part, the public values the remote, undeveloped character of the Arizona Strip. The pervasive message of the scoping comments was to leave it as it is. This, however, means different things to different individuals and groups. To some it means to protect the resources and to some it means to keep all existing uses the same.

Many of the public values the great landscapes away from civilization and the opportunities they represent to get away from it all. This reflects the same kinds of comments heard in the previous planning effort on the Arizona Strip (1992).

Specifically, the public is concerned about protection of natural and cultural resources -- particularly those in the national monuments -- and current uses and access, so long as the current uses and access do not degrade the natural and cultural resources of the Arizona Strip.

A wide range of recreational activities were mentioned as important in the area, including hiking, hunting, sightseeing, bird watching, ATV use, and other activities that could be conducted in remote settings away from towns.

The public also wanted to have fair treatment and meaningful involvement in the planning effort.

Each of the top comment categories is summarized below.

Access

The most frequently received comments regarded transportation and access concerns. This category also covered ATV/OHV comments. Reviewers categorized statements about these issues into three areas: Condition/Supply, Opportunities/Needs and Limitations. In addition to comments directly addressing Transportation/Access, other comments in related categories, such as Recreation, Visitor Experience, Interpretation/Education, Visitor Facilities, and Status Quo, and Quiet, gave a broader picture of transportation and access desires.

The majority of comments received specifically referenced transportation and access concerns within the two national monuments. Many comments were not tied to a specific location and were assumed to apply to the Arizona Strip as a whole – monuments and public domain.

Condition/Supply of Transportation/Access Systems

Comments regarding the supply and/or condition of the existing system of routes, trails and open landscapes were diverse.

“The areas are heavily abused by ATV usage.”

”Notice more signs of ATVs going off road, making tracks in unbroken soils at places like Kelly Point (GCPNM).”

“(In the monuments), the existing network of roads is threatening the resources, motor vehicles are damaging wildlife habitat and driving over archeological sites and historic trails, ATVs and ORVs are creating new tracks by traveling off established roads.”

”(ORV) use pollutes the air or produces constant noise for the people who come to visit or camp (in the monuments.)”

“Manage (the monuments) with a view to preserving the area as it is now; very limited road closures, no widespread road improvements; essentially, keep it as it is.”

“New roads are not needed, though some of the existing roads could be maintained better, but not paved.”

“Roads should be left unpaved.”

“It is imperative that R.S. 2477 rights-of-way be protected (in the monuments.)”

“Some roads should be passable by motor homes or paved, yet leave some for remote travelers with 4X4s.”

“Periodically improve poorer unkempt roads and make them safer, grade a ditch along the edge that can hold rains and reduce the depth of mud. Too much vegetation along roads makes drivers nervous because they can’t see unexpected wildlife or livestock.”

“Hunters depend on a good network of what we call ‘2-track.’”

Several comments suggest that supply of roads available for use in the monuments is dependent on first applying the definition of a ‘road’ as it is used in the wilderness inventory (see BLM Handbook H-6310-1).

“Any identified road must meet the legal definition of a road (H.R. 94-1163 at 17 [*part of the legislative history of FLPMA regarding wilderness review*]). . .and should be justified (by) taking into account the spatial pattern of roads, not merely mileage.”

Opportunities/Need for Transportation/Access

Comments in this category typically involved expressions of values or suggestions for future management scenarios. A significant number of comments described ideal or desired settings with specific reference to a ‘motorized/non-motorized’ element. These, again, were distributed all along a range of values.

Generally, commenter desiring fewer motorized settings cited noise, odor and impacts to the environment as elements conflicting with their desire for peace, quiet and enjoyment of nature. Enthusiasts envisioning access by motorized modes, on the other hand, seemed to value the use, enjoyment or need of the motorized mode along with their enjoyment of a variety of other recreation activities. All commenter seemed to have several themes in common: A certain level of protection of the land, access to the land, and personal benefits from the enjoyment of activities made possible by that access. Only two comments cited a desire to ‘be able to ride ATVs and go wherever we want to go.’

“It would be impossible for me to enjoy any of the Arizona Strip if we weren’t able to use the existing roads and trails.”

”Access to these lands with minimum impact can be accomplished via air travel.”

“(ATVs) allow older people as well as handicapped people access to our beautiful country.”

”I value accessibility to those who wish to visit the monuments; road/trail access is very important to us. We are avid ATV riders and feel it’s the best way to tour. An existing road/trail network is essential. We don’t like to go cross-country.”

“Off-road vehicle should not be offensive to fellow visitors or wildlife; vehicles should be muffled and meet workable clean air standards.”

”Public lands are for enjoyment of everyone; ORVs restrict this enjoyment and diminish what makes these places attractive.”

“We should only hear the natural sounds of this world and not the roar of vehicles.”

A significant number of comments offered a wide variety of suggestions for management of access and transportation systems. Once again, the extremes were defined by ‘keep all previous access open’ scenarios to ‘access only by shoe leather.’ However, the majority of comments suggesting future scenarios offered a variety of constructive alternatives to dealing with access. Other comments suggested actions such as designation of areas for ‘rock crawler’ events, identification of single-track trails, and working more closely with local communities coordinating trail interfaces.

“Certain areas should be managed to facilitate primitive, non-motorized , non-mechanized recreation (in the monuments.)”

”We need proactive OHV planning in this area (Arizona Strip.)”

“(On the Arizona Strip), allow for future development of trail systems to accommodate increased recreational use. Consider alternative that allow full implementation of the agency’s OHV policy and direct land managers to identify and develop OHV travel systems in appropriate areas. Develop management alternatives that allow for additional access and additional recreation opportunities in other areas, i.e. look for OHV ‘play’ areas located close to urban areas. Agencies should plan for organized OHV activities.”

”Plan to park all vehicles on the periphery of protected area (monuments) and use dignified mass transit.”

“There are existing roads that should be obliterated and restored to their natural state. There should be consideration of opportunities for identifying such roads for reconfiguration as non-motorized recreational trails.”

”All roads (in the monuments) should remain open. There should be some roads for extreme 4X4 persons who want a challenge.”

”A better system of road conditions is needed including maps showing numbered roads. Ensure roads have adequate warning signs in appropriate areas, written in several languages; signs must be monitored and maintained, utilize volunteers. Establish a better relationship with local off highway and ATV groups.”

“(In the Parashant N.M.), ATVs should be allowed on established routes that are designated to include specific routes that create loops and scenic/historic destinations.”

“We need at least one paved route/loop through the Strip area to provide access to Trumbull and Toroweap Point.”

“Most people can’t walk or ride horses into this area; it is very important that ATV and vehicles be allowed to continue to use the roads and trails. Manage it, don’t close it.”

“Planning should accommodate increasing number of off highway vehicles and recreational users. Additional areas should be identified and managed under the Open category and easily accessed from population centers. Designate a sufficient number of routes to allow a diversity of recreation opportunities; organized motorized event routes should be included in the route inventory and planning should provide flexibility for additional routes. Identify and designate up to four additional staging areas for future use. We ask that a concept of a multi-user motorized trail system be included in the travel and management plans for the Arizona Strip and monuments.”

The most common comment regarding future management scenarios for the monuments called for designating a transportation system with a primary goal of protecting the monuments’ resources. The comment stated that roads should be maintained only to the extent that they access key destinations, unnecessary or ecologically harmful roads should be closed, and damaged areas should be restored.

Limitations on Motorized/Mechanized Use

Almost all comments offered suggestions to the location and/or the degree of limits on motorized and mechanized use. Again, comments varied widely from ‘prevent any kind of internal combustion engine from any monument you administer’ to ‘We want to be able to ride ATVs

and go wherever we want to go.’ Many comments were generic as to ‘limiting ORV use’ or ‘limit to existing or designated routes only.’ A number of comments suggested OHV use be relegated to areas other than the monuments, while many OHV users recommended that certain routes be established in the monuments and rules enforced.

One comment stated that areas on the Strip should be left open for OHV access because ‘closure of areas to 4X4s, dirt bikes, and ATVs would effect (sic) the economies of the surrounding towns.’

A very great number of comments suggested closures and limits tied to evaluations of the need for and effects of routes.

“(Within the monuments), unnecessary or ecologically harmful roads, trails and routes should be closed and those damaged areas should be restored or reclaimed. Off-road vehicles must be limited to roads designated for their use.”

“Absolutely no roads or trails should be closed unless the environmental effects are clearly unacceptable and significant on a site specific basis and only if a substitute routing is constructed and offered.”

Wilderness

Wilderness, as a resource (setting), is really part of the broader Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) as described in the Remoteness topic. It is really the very primitive end of that spectrum, juxtaposed with urban settings. As part of an overall range of landscape settings, it was therefore considered a part of the Remoteness Issue in the Preparation Plan. Likewise, the use of wilderness for recreational activities logically resides under the Recreation topic.

Still other aspects of wilderness management, such as the potential need for ecosystem restoration, are assumed to primarily be part of the Restoration Issue as described in the Preparation Plan, with wilderness constraint and restraint as important factors in the decision making process. One comment specifically endorsed a strategy that any restoration in the Mt. Trumbull Wilderness “should be based on thorough assessment of conditions and trends at the stand and landscape scales and it must respect the freedom of the wilderness.”

With the advent of the BLM Wilderness Inventory/Study Handbook in January, 2001 came a mandate to 1) inventory and/or study previously uninventoried lands acquired through exchange, purchase or donation and, 2) consider new information regarding wilderness character, either through Bureau data collection or new information submitted by citizens or citizen groups.

In addition to many comments submitted by individuals concerning wilderness generally, a comprehensive proposal for Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) totaling some 950,000 acres was submitted by the Arizona Wilderness Coalition during the scoping process. Lands proposed are primarily located in the Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermilion Cliffs National Monuments.

Additional acres are likely to be proposed on the Arizona Strip public domain lands during the land-use planning process.

As expected, general comments concerning wilderness range broadly from “no wilderness” to “all wilderness.”

Wilderness Character and Allocation

The majority of comments entreated BLM to “inventory and protect lands qualifying for wilderness” and “provide interim protection to wilderness quality lands by designating such lands as WSAs.” A significant number of other comments took a position such as “we would not support any recommendations for additional wilderness” while several took a more “middle-of-the-road” approach such as, “preserve the area as it is now; limited use of wilderness designation.”

A number of comments were more generic, referring to ‘wild’ resources, but not wilderness specifically.

“Keep the greater Grand Canyon region wild.”

A number of comments seemed to refer to the effects of current wilderness designations; effects such as closed roads and ‘pernicious user fee demonstration programs.’ Many commenters felt that there is already enough wilderness on the Arizona Strip.

Wilderness as a Tool

Numerous commenter believe that wilderness designation (whether statutory or WSA) is a critical tool for protecting a number of other values.

“Monuments should be inventoried for wilderness designation to protect habitats and natural processes.”

“The number one value of these lands is their wildness. Large, somewhat pristine, natural areas are quickly disappearing. These areas serve not only as refuges for native species of plants and animals, they also offer primitive recreation opportunities for people.”

“Wilderness designation will protect the values for which the monuments were originally established.”

“As a commercially permitted user, we value and rely upon wilderness areas for our classroom.”

Values, Experience and Benefits of Wilderness

Many comments included wilderness among other important core values held for public lands. Others included scenic resources, quiet, freedom, undeveloped lands, open space, inaccessibility, dark skies, family, future generations and spiritual experience. Some commenter had absolutely no use or value for wilderness.

“I value lands because they are not locked away.”

“I need wild lands to reflect on the beauty, ruggedness and harshness of the natural world.”

“Wilderness is wasted, useless land that has no economic value.”

“It is still important to me that the wilderness is still there.”

General Comments

General comments can be divided into two categories; appropriate NEPA analysis and coordination.

Under appropriate NEPA analysis, the bulk of the comments (all but five) were from the Wilderness Society form letter which stated

“All decisions that may degrade National Monument values must be justified through comprehensive environmental analysis and public review and comments.”

A few additional comments also mentioned fair, meaningful involvement by the public, such as

“Provide for all fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people including ranchers and associated businesses with the respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws...”

In addition, a few comments mentioned planning coordination, like

“...planning coordinated with Grand Staircase Escalante...”

“Work with the other units (FS, NPS) to make a consistent, effective plan to protect these resources.”

“Include state, tribal and local government entities in the preparation of federal EIS.”

According to the comments, the public wants a fair, meaningful, and open planning process in which they can be involved, if they wish. Coordination with adjacent agencies is also necessary for an effective plan.

Protection of Resources

Concern was expressed by many people about the protection of the natural and cultural resources across the Arizona Strip, with the emphasis being on protecting the resources within GCPNM and VCNM for which these monuments were created. Several categories under this general heading are discussed below. These include our Scoping Comment categories of Monument Resources, Biological Resources, and Archaeological and Historic Resources.

Overall it may be interpreted as a concern for the general health of the land and the resources it contains. By looking at it as an ecological system, this includes all natural and cultural resources. Key indicators should probably be developed for implementation and monitoring. Some of the concerns might be ecological systems outside their range of natural variability, skewed species composition, vegetation or wildlife communities at risk of further degradation due to catastrophic fire or disease, or soil loss due to a lack of effective ground cover and monotypic vegetation community.

As land managing agencies, the NPS and BLM should determine where they would like to be (desired future condition) and develop solutions to the problems. Tools to achieve resource objectives and a healthier landscape might be to selectively remove individual species, reintroduce fire into the landscape, re-establish the natural disturbance regime, planting/seeding, allowing livestock grazing to reduce forage. A range of treatments, which vary in intensity and spatial scale, should be developed to address concerns. Below the resource discussions, the tools to achieve healthy landscapes are listed and discussed.

Monument Resources

Of the 797 comments received specifically regarding the category for protection of resources, 782 were verbatim form comments directed to GVPNM and VCNM. The excerpted statement reads:

“Protect all the resources and objects that the Presidential Proclamations mention for protection; develop specific, measurable goals for the protection of these resources; determine a maximum carrying capacity that ensures natural resource sustainability with Grand Canyon Parashant and Vermilion National Monuments.”

Eleven form letter respondents included additional comments about the preservation and protection of native plants and animals, scenery, artifacts, wilderness, or biological diversity. Two urged banning ATVs.

Planners received 15 comments about protection of resources that were not form letters. Twelve urged strong protection and preservation, including three that wanted the area protected from off-road use, grazing and energy development. One believed “these projects limit the use to a privileged few,” one stated grazing, hunting, mining and recreation were important activities, and one urged “wood and other resources” to be used.

Biological Resources

Summarized below are public comments on wildlife and special status animal species. Comments were paraphrased and placed in broad general categories. Like comments were combined where possible.

Protection of Ecosystem Function and Biological Diversity

The majority of comments focused on the importance of maintaining biological diversity and ecosystem functions. Wildlife habitat and solitude were recognized as important values that required protection from a variety of change agents including development, recreation, and livestock grazing. Conservation and restoration of functional systems with full complements of native species was considered a priority.

Examples of values and concerns provided include:

“The Strip has exceptional value as wildlife habitat now and in the future”

“Protect the diversity and abundance of native vegetation and wildlife species, natural water sources, and landforms that create habitat and food resources for wildlife”

“Protect and restore the natural systems and native species, emphasizing biodiversity and ecosystem and landscape health”

“Assess existing scientific wildlife studies and conduct new studies to determine wildlife land use patterns, feeding ecology, population dynamics and ecology, key areas, migratory corridors, and important buffer areas”-;

The following issues were developed from the values and concerns provided from scoping comments:

Issue: Protection of wildlife and their habitat is currently inadequate.

Issue: BLM management actions are not being adequately evaluated for impacts to wildlife species.

Issue: The planning effort will increase contact between wildlife and humans, resulting in negative impacts to wildlife (e.g. travel corridors, migratory routes, etc.).

Issue: Wildlife populations are declining (due to improper or inadequate management).

Special Status Animal Species

Most comments indicated special status species are considered a value, particularly California condors and desert tortoise. Some indicated protection for these species was inadequate, and proposed the designation of special management areas to increase protection for the species. Others stressed the importance of compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Several reviewers indicated that protections afforded special status species precluded other legitimate uses of public lands and should be moderated. Re-introductions were proposed for several species including black-footed ferrets (not native to the Arizona Strip) and bald eagles (currently found on the Strip during the winter months).

Examples of values and concerns provided include:

- Ensure protection and recovery of special status species and critical habitat by ensuring they are adequately considered or addressed when projects are planned;
- Ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act through consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service as appropriate;
- Reintroduce black-footed ferrets and bald eagles
- Designate special management areas to protect special status species habitat;
- Ensure areas with special status species concerns are not closed to human use activities (e.g. livestock grazing);
- Impose seasonal closures for portions of the Strip known to be nesting habitat for raptors;

The following issues were developed from the values and concerns provided from scoping comments:

- Issue: Protection of special status species and their habitat is currently inadequate.
- Issue: Sensitive habitat areas (e.g. sky islands, springs, seeps, travel corridors, etc.,) are not adequately protected and are or may be degraded.
- Issue: BLM programs and actions are not being adequately evaluated under the ESA.
- Issue: Special status species are negatively affecting BLM authorized uses (e.g. grazing).
- Issue: Un-restrained recreation is negatively affecting special status species;
- Issue: Reintroduction of extirpated special status species should be a higher priority than under current management.

Wildlife Management Actions

Comments indicated concern with several aspects of wildlife management actions. Existing studies and monitoring are not considered adequate for planning. Some expressed concern that plans are not providing sufficient protection for wildlife or preventing habitat fragmentation. Comments indicated impacts to wildlife and their habitats are not being adequately addressed in NEPA documents. Some comments indicated more aggressive predator management was necessary, while others proposed minimizing control methods and reintroducing large predator species. Exotic and feral animals are viewed as problems that need to be addressed through aggressive actions. Hunting and related activities are valued on the Strip. Concerns were expressed that some wildlife populations may be declining, particularly native fish, pronghorn antelope, and mule deer. Water developments were also of concern. Some comments indicated the need to continue to develop and maintain waters for wildlife. Others value access to those waters for hunting opportunities and to ensure regular maintenance.

Examples of values and concerns provided include:

Analyze all management actions for their impact on wildlife and wildlife habitat;
Develop plans and strategies to ensure healthy self-sustaining wildlife populations, and protect vast open landscapes of unfragmented areas free from development;
Aggressively manage predator populations;
Reintroduce and /or limit management of predator species;
Ensure that hunting, target shooting, and access to these areas continues to be authorized;
Increase pronghorn antelope herds;
Develop, maintain, enhance, or restore springs and seeps as well as artificial water sources for the wildlife;
Ensure wildlife have safe access to waters;
Consider a broad range of tools in managing wildlife including aircraft use for survey and capture, reintroductions, water construction, etc.;

The following issues were developed from the values and concerns provided from scoping comments:

Issue: Wildlife habitats are degraded.
Issue: Existing wildlife inventory and monitoring studies are inadequate for planning.
Issue: The planning effort will restrict wildlife management efforts (e.g. State's authority, use of aircraft, reintroductions, maintenance, etc.)
Issue: Predator management will become more/less restrictive, leading to unbalanced or unnatural systems or a proliferation of predators.
Issue: Exotic and/or feral species (e.g. burros) are causing resource damage but are currently protected.
Issue: Hunting or access to hunting areas will be restricted or eliminated (despite Monument Proclamations)
Issue: Access to wildlife waters is/will be restricted for wildlife, ranchers, hunters.
Issue: No new waters will be built and existing facilities are not/will not be maintained.
Issue: Existing livestock and wildlife waters are unsafe or otherwise unsuitable for wildlife.
Issue: Native fish populations are being negatively impacted by livestock waters and operation of Glen Canyon Dam.
Issue: Pronghorn antelope populations are too low and should be increased.
Issue: Mule populations are too low and should be increased.

Management Actions of Other BLM Programs

Comments were received regarding management of other BLM programs and the effects of these actions on wildlife. Concerns were expressed that the effects of the ponderosa pine restoration work at Mt. Trumbull were not adequately addressing impacts to wildlife. The effects on wildlife of recreational activities, such as OHV/ATV use, and livestock grazing are also of concern. Some comments indicated literature was available that identifies benefits to wildlife resulting from livestock grazing. Concern was expressed that access routes will be closed or restricted or that existing or new routes are or will negatively affect wildlife.

Examples of values and concerns provided include:

- Monitor forest restoration projects for their effect on wildlife;
- Manage visitor use and recreation by limiting activities and closing areas to prevent impacts to sensitive species such as California condor, desert tortoise; and Holmgren milk vetch
- Continue to authorize ranchers to maintain developed waters that benefit wildlife;
- Maintain access roads to wildlife water developments and other components of wildlife habitat;

The following issues were developed from the values and concerns provided from scoping comments:

- Issue: Access to wildlife areas is/will be restricted for humans.
- Issue: Restoration actions are not being adequately evaluated for impacts to wildlife species.

Interagency Coordination / Connectivity

Several comments were provided encouraging cooperation between the BLM planning effort and neighboring landowners and wildlife management agencies. In particular, some comments indicated the importance of protecting key wildlife areas and migratory corridors.

- Cooperate with the State wildlife management agency;
- Coordinate with Escalante region, Capitol Reef, Bryce, Zion, etc to create migratory pathways for larger mammals;

There were no issues generated from these scoping comments.

Archaeological and Historical Resources

There were 103 comments relating to archaeological or historical resources. They can be broken into the following categories; protection of the resources, scientific study, the value of our past, access as a detriment, and compliments for existing programs.

Protection

Most of the comments fall into this category, particularly as part of the protection of the resources identified in the Proclamations for both monuments. The statement on the form letter emails (30 of them) says:

- “Provide better protection for archaeological resources threatened by pot hunters and off-road vehicle use.”

Other statements also urge protection of cultural resource sites. These are:

“Protect cultural significant areas.”

“Protect the Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermilion Cliffs National Monuments. Their special features (archaeology and relicts) need to be preserved.”

“...provide better protection for archaeological resources...”

“More patrolling and protection of cultural resources...”

“Protect petroglyphs...”

“Manage for better protection for cultural and archaeological resources.”

“Ensure that archaeological sites are protected from vandals and thieves.”

“Do whatever it takes to protect cultural resources.”

Scientific Study

Some comments indicate that inventory and study of these resources is an important consideration:

“Ensure awareness and preservation of cultural history for public education now and future generations; inventory cultural resources before allowing tourism with motorized recreational vehicles impaction.”

“Establish program or record historic and prehistoric structures and objects.”

“Imperative that the management plan is science based and that it provides the highest level of protection possible for the incredible archaeological features...”

“Need more research on the Indians.”

Other comments stated that public land managers must know where the cultural resources are before they can authorize any activities on the public lands.

“Until you have concluded a 100% inventory of cultural resources, you should not spend a penny to promote motorized recreation that might damage archaeological sites.”

The Value of Our Past

Some comments indicated the value of knowing our past, as well as preserving it.

“Value cultural resources, historic and prehistoric, because it’s all of our history and tells us about history of the West and settlement.”

“Provide us with an understanding of our own cultural and technological evolution...”

“Ensure awareness and preservation of cultural history for public education now and future generations.”

“Promote an ethic that honors petroglyphs as sacred places, like churches of other peoples faith.”

“Protect the historical sites so that we can pass this history on to future generations.”

Access as a Detriment

The access spoken about in the comments is of two distinct types. These are foot or vehicle access and access to information on the location of the sites themselves. Such as

“I am hesitant about very specific telling of prehistoric site locations.”

“Do not show where existing archaeological sites are.”

“Keep cultural and archaeological sites unpublicized.”

Or

“Reducing roads will also enhance protection and reduce damage to cultural resources due to both inadvertent impacts (road damage, camping on sites, etc.) and deliberate vandalism.”

“We have too often seen ORV tracks in very remote areas, going across archaeological sites. The damage is irreparable. Archaeological sites must be protected. As you know, some sites in Utah are completely hunted with 10-20 large potholes. If the BLM can do anything to stop or slow down this destruction, please do so.”

“...would like to see the archaeological sites protected from vandalism, particularly prevent road access to the sites.”

But people still want to access cultural sites:

“Cultural resource protection should not be implemented with large area access closures.”

“Preserve and protect traditional and cultural areas but we should be able to have access.”

“Include provisions for appropriate access to the Monument by qualified researchers and educators in a variety of fields of science and history. It is essential that the Resource Management Plans be structured to ensure that the American public continues to benefit from appropriate archaeological research and well designed educational programs focused on the archaeology of the area.”

“Keep the resources available to the public.”

Compliments for Existing Programs

The Arizona Site Steward program is viewed favorably and several comments suggested extending the program:

“Expand Steward programs.”

“Keep volunteers doing the site stewardship program and protecting our cultural areas.”

“..cultural site steward program extended.”

Cultural resource comments also reflect the interrelationship with interpretive and education programs. The public wants to see and learn about the past but they also want the sites protected.

Grazing

The comments regarding grazing ranged from grazing and ranching operations should remain unchanged to livestock grazing should be eliminated. The comments about no change tended to not specify area, while those seeking to limit or eliminate grazing generally referred to just the monuments.

Those favoring grazing stated that livestock grazing is a legitimate use of the public lands on the Arizona Strip and should be continued as one of they many multiple uses.

Comments more critical of grazing recommended evaluating impacts of livestock grazing and developing management options for mitigating negative impacts, especially as they related to desert tortoise. Others called for restoration of overgrazed grasslands and for implementing creative solutions to grazing impacts.

Still others recommended that livestock grazing be continued as long as its impacts are evaluated and the effect on other resources mitigated.

Recreation

Important Recreation Activities

Comments reflected the wide variety of recreation activities enjoyed in all parts of the Arizona Strip. Activities that commenter prefer include hiking, walking, backpacking, hunting, fishing (though no opportunities exist on the Strip), viewing nature, sightseeing, mountain biking photography, equestrian, visiting cultural sites, rockhounding, prospecting, driving, ATV, motorcycle, 4X4, camping picnicking, rock climbing, river sports, shooting targets, and collecting (flower, pine nuts, firewood.)

Of the comments received concerning recreation, those activities receiving the most comments were in the categories of Hiking/Walking/Backpacking, Camping/Picnicking, and Viewing Nature/Sightseeing. A significant number of comments were received regarding OHV (driving, ATV, motorcycles, 4X4, etc.), Hunting/Fishing, and Visiting Cultural Sites. A number of comments were received concerning Mountain Biking, Photography, Equestrian, Rock hounding/Prospecting, and Rock Climbing. Only one comment received listed River Sports as a preferred activity. Several comments were received that report recreation use involving the use of aircraft.

“Back country pilot associations currently use the Arizona Strip for surveillance, emergency landing strips, and camping. Back country strips make available to the physically disabled and other who cannot hike, the unparalleled beauties of the remote wilderness.”

Those that prefer hiking did not necessarily differentiate between a preference for trail or off-trail hiking; however, several comments did indicate variety of views on trail preference.

“Establish trails for hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bikes into the (monuments’) backcountry.”

“I enjoy hiking, but feel that the present trail system is adequate; do not develop other areas for recreational purposes.”

“No new trails that destroy plant life.”

“Highlight the use of existing jeep tracks as hiking trails.”

While certain activities such as Hiking/Walking/Backpacking, Viewing Nature/Sightseeing, and Camping/Picnicking, are enjoyed by virtually all commenter, the majority of those who enjoy Viewing Nature/Sightseeing and Viewing Cultural Sites appear use motorized modes of transportation to do it. Viewing Nature/Sightseeing as an activity was expressed in a variety of ways, such as ‘exploring,’ ‘nature study,’ or ‘sightseeing.’

“Important activities are hunting, exploring, and learning about the natural values.”

“Enjoy the opportunity for back road driving without seeing anyone else.”

“Sightseeing and family drives are important to rural residents.”

“Exploring this area on foot.”

Comments concerning the mode for camping ranged from “no camping at all” to “more developed campgrounds.” The majority of commenter for Camping/Picnicking seemed to prefer dispersed, undeveloped or designated sites. A few commenter suggested more facilities to support their activity.

“Maybe put in some designated campsites with facilities.”

“I prefer to car camp outside developed campgrounds because I like to see the stars and not be crammed in beside a bunch of other campers.”

“Camping should be dispersed throughout the monuments, not confined to designated campgrounds.”

“No camping other than what can be carried in on backpack.”

Numerous comments that referenced Hunting/Fishing and Collecting did so in the context of traditional and/or family activities. Comments regarding OHV (driving, ATV, motorcycle, 4X4, events, etc.) were received from those who enjoy motorized activities and those who detest it. Again, many of these activities seem to involve family and are considered traditional. Several comments had very specific suggestions about how to improve or enhance or control these activities.

“Areas such as ‘tot lots,’ ‘staging areas’ and ‘play areas’ should be identified, marked and designated open.”

“Important activities are camping in primitive campgrounds and following trails and well-marked roads.”

“Start building a trail system for responsible citizens, not lock us or keep us out.”

“Don’t develop the monuments into a motorized playground.”

Other comments expressed preferences for “bicycling, hiking on designated trails and unmarked areas,” “managed equestrian,” “being able to look for pretty rocks and if we find one, being able to take it,” “boulder hopping, rock climbing and rappelling,” and “undeveloped hot springs.”

Visitor Management

Comments regarding visitor management typically involved Fees/Permits, Commercial/Competitive Use, Limiting Use, Visitor Information/Interpretation, and Visitor Facilities. Of the few comments specifically mentioning Fees/Permits, all but one endorsed a policy of ‘free use’ or ‘free access,’ with only one comment suggesting that ‘camping be allowed by (free) permit.’

The few comment received concerning organized events ranged from ‘no competitive events (anywhere on the Strip)’ to ‘BLM should recognize organized OHV events are highly valued by the public.’ Several comments suggested the use of ‘guided tours’ to help protect resources.

“Some resources might need to be managed with guided tours in order to protect them.”

Finally, suggestions were made that there be ‘some restriction on (commercial) horseback rides,’ that BLM ‘keep concessionaires out of these areas’ and that BLM ‘limit Special Recreation Permits.’

In the category of Limiting Use, comments varied from “maximum recreational use with minimal development” to a “permit system that would restrict numbers of humans allowed into the area at any one time.” Several comments provided various options to be considered in planning.

“Identify uses that will be acceptable/allowable; Manage overnight camping to prevent impact to resources, prohibiting camping in sensitive areas or limiting camping to designated sites; Rock climbing not be allowed where it would harm (sensitive) resources; Prohibit recreational collecting of objects.”

“Establish a position on rock climbing that allows access but requires approval for setting fixed protection pieces.”

“Recreation use should be limited as necessary to protect the character and integrity of the monuments.”

“Manage, monitor and control recreational activity to minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources.”

“Require fire pans and removal of ash.”

“No hunting, shooting, four-wheeling.”

“Regions should be set aside for activities such as ATV/ORV use, hunting, as well as hiking, backpacking, bicycling.”

With regard to Visitor Information/Interpretation, numerous commenter requested good maps, well-marked/signed trails and roads, recreation opportunity guides, and greater use of Leave No Trace. And finally, in reference to Visitor Facilities, the overwhelming majority of commenter was adamant about visitor facilities being kept out of the monuments. There were, however, a number of proponents of small-scale facilities and services onsite.

Remoteness

Remoteness, for the purposes of comment analysis, generally refers to a variety of landscape settings envisioned by the public. In planning, remoteness is most often described using the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), a common planning tool. While it is inextricably linked to recreation activities, experiences and benefits, remoteness focuses on the settings in which they take place. The recreation comments then address the ‘use side’ of the recreation equation.

Many comments were documented in the remoteness category. A great many more references and a broader picture of remoteness, or the management of settings, was revealed by cross referencing related comment categories, such as visitor experience, recreation, status quo, spiritual, visitor facilities, interpretation/education, and quiet. Many different terms are used by commenter, which are or may be synonymous with ‘remoteness.’ Words and phrases like ‘isolation,’ ‘solitude,’ ‘backcountry character,’ ‘unspoiled,’ ‘undeveloped,’ ‘freedom,’ ‘rare,’ ‘wide open spaces’ were frequently found in the context of describing a setting somewhat, if not entirely, juxtaposed to urban life.

Most comments involved observations or opinions that are easily categorized as concerns for the physical settings, the social settings or the management settings for the Arizona Strip. Because these settings are the backbone of ROS and thus, the crux of remoteness, this valuable information will aid planners in the using the ROS planning tool to develop an appropriate direction for the management of recreation settings. Thus, ROS and remoteness will ‘further’ the purposes of the monuments and the opportunities on the public domain by helping define appropriate levels of human-induced change to landscapes; appropriate visitor management and even route locations and maintenance and; appropriate levels of management presence, such as signing, information/interpretation, facilities, regulation and even enforcement presence.

Remoteness Qualities Present

Virtually all of the comments received that were related to the theme of remoteness described the Arizona Strip as a great undeveloped region. The quality of remoteness was almost always described as high.

“I am drawn to the Arizona Strip because it has retained much of its wild and remote character. It is rare in the West.”

“I value the remoteness, a hidden treasure of freedom and peace away from society; once you lose the remoteness, you lose the Strip.”

Preferred Activities Associated with Remoteness

A great many comments described engaging in various activities in remote settings. It is clear from the comments that the settings are important to the quality of the experiences derived from the activities.

Values, Experience and Benefits of Remoteness

Many comments included remoteness among other important core values held for public lands. Others included scenic resources, solitude, naturalness, quiet, freedom, undeveloped or slightly developed lands (including roads), open space, inaccessibility/accessibility, dark skies, family, future generations and spiritual experience.

“Retain natural wonders (settings) for your children and grandchildren, humanity needs the space, clean air, peace and quiet and the opportunity for reflection.”

“The more remote, the better.”

“Any infrastructure improvements, i.e., paved roads, visitor centers, campgrounds and general tourist amenities, etc. would destroy the positive values that presently exist, specifically those of remoteness and isolation.”

“The greatest values of the Strip are its solitude, peace and quiet, and freedoms—particularly the freedom to discover places on your own.”

“Remote nature and outstanding opportunities for solitude make a remarkable refuge from the overcrowded conditions of many other public lands.”

While a large majority of comments seem to be describing primitive and semi-primitive settings in referring to remoteness, a significant number of comments revealed that remoteness should not necessarily be considered as synonymous with “wild” or more specifically, “wilderness.” The examples below make the point that mostly natural settings with some degree of motorized access, information and facility development is also desired.

“I value lands that are undeveloped, isolated and have limited access.”

“I value the remote areas that can be fairly easily reached via a network of roads with little permanent signs of man.”

“The Strip should keep its remote, undeveloped character with sustainable levels of current uses such as visitation, recreation, grazing, hunting.”

“Public information stations should be built.”

“Better signs and information facilities at scenic and historic attractions.”

“In monuments, maybe put in some designated campsites with facilities.”

Numerous comments expressed the personal and societal benefits accrued through the enjoyment of the remote lands of the Arizona Strip.

“The opportunity to see a large panorama of land in its natural state is very therapeutic to me and give balance to my perspective.”

“I value undeveloped open/natural space for solitude, recreation, views, and quiet.”

“I value these lands as a way to get out of the city.”

Protection of Remoteness

Underlying almost all comments was a desire to see remoteness protected and preserved. Almost all comments stated a desire to see roads remain unpaved and visitor facilities located outside the monuments as a means of retaining remoteness; many specifically expressed a desire for the Toroweap road to remain unpaved.

“Keep the Strip remote.”

“Safeguard the remoteness and undeveloped character of these landscapes (monuments.)”

“Retain the backcountry character of the Monuments.”

“It is imperative that the plan provides the highest level of protection possible for its remoteness.”

Fish and Wildlife

Comments in this category also varied considerably but were primarily focused on the hunting and fishing of game and fish. Many stated that the current level of protection for wildlife species and wildlife habitat was inadequate, with some believing the inadequacies were causing wildlife populations to decline. Other comments expressed concern about future management actions having a negative effect on wildlife populations.

Others believed the protection of sensitive (including threatened and endangered) species too severely limited other legitimate uses of the land.

Some expressed concern about the monument designations negatively affecting hunting, access to wildlife and the state’s ability to manage wildlife. Comments also addressed the negative effects of exotic species.

Fire

Several comments urged returning fire to the ecosystem, mostly by letting fire run its course or a “let-burn” policy. Some stated that fire management practices should be allowed. One comment stated that fire, reseeding and land restoration should be allowed.

Several people expressed concern about the build-up of high fuel loads, stating that logging and/or cattle grazing are effective methods of reducing high fuel loads. Over-regulation and past land management was also cited as causes of high fuel loads.

Planning Considerations

Valid Existing Management to be Carried Forward

All valid existing decisions possible will be carried forward into the Arizona Strip planning effort. The Arizona Strip RMP (1992) is a decade old and many of the decisions are still valid. The Lake Mead GMP (1986), with valid decisions covering those portions of Lake Mead NRA within the GCPNM, can be carried forward. In addition, valid existing decisions can be found in other planning documents such as the Mojave Desert Amendment to the RMP (1998), the Mt. Trumbull Resource Conservation Area Plan (1995), and the Parashant Interdisciplinary Management Plan (1997). The Land Use Plan Evaluation (Appendix 3) delineates all valid decisions from these documents.

Anticipated Decisions

All valid existing decisions brought forward from previous plans will be screened through the planning guidance, including the planning criteria. Ongoing plan evaluation and alternative development will continue with the core planning team, planning team specialists, and the cooperating agencies, which should further refine the decisions to be made in the planning effort.

The Planning Questions listed below reflect the kinds of decisions that will need to be made in the planning effort (refer to Appendix C of the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1610-1).

Planning Questions to Carry Forward

The following planning questions address public issues of concern as well as some management concerns. These are the planning questions to be carried forward into the planning effort. All of these questions will be addressed in the draft EIS/MP.

Air

What are the desired future conditions of air quality on the Arizona Strip?

What are the criteria or restrictions for air quality to be used in cooperation with the state of Arizona?

Cultural Resources

Does the RMP provide a basis for understanding the distribution, comparative importance, and potential uses of cultural resources across the Strip? Does it address relative sensitivity, relative opportunities for interpretive development, relative scientific importance, relative potential for research and education?

Are all classes of cultural properties, both known and projected to occur, allocated to one or more of the use categories defined in Manual 8110?

Is there a need to change any present cultural use allocations based on new information, public demand, or research needs?

Fire Management

Where are the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas that are threatened by wildland fire on the Arizona Strip? What criteria will be used to prioritize these areas and how will future impacts from wildland fire be reduced?

Where are other areas where wildland fire is not desired? What criteria will be used to prioritize these areas for future fuels treatments to reduce the negative impact of wildland fire?

Where are the areas where wildland fire may be used to further resource objectives or achieve desired future conditions? What criteria will be used to prioritize or manage these areas effectively with wildland fire?

How will areas of high priority for using prescribed fire as a management tool be identified and prioritized?

Are there any general restrictions on fire management practices (including wildfire suppression and fuels management) needed to protect other resource values?

Forestry

What are the characteristics (indicators) to describe healthy forest conditions (desired future conditions) for forest/woodland types found on the Arizona Strip?

What is the suite of management actions (including appropriate harvest, reforestation, and forest development methods) and associated best management practices that can be applied to meet desired future conditions and underlying land use allocations?

Where are the areas that have the capacity for planned, sustained-yield timber harvest or special forest product harvest?

Interpretation/Education

What facilities and infrastructure are needed to provide visitor services and administration of the area resources? Where should they be located?

What community programs should be available to help community members support BLM and NPS public land initiatives and to educate about the appropriate uses of public lands?

To what extent, and where, are traditional visitor facilities such as trails, trailheads, restrooms, overlook areas, camping, and parking areas needed in the monuments?

How can visitor services, administrative facilities, and interpretation/education programs uphold the primary objective: to preserve the remote and unspoiled landscape character of the Arizona Strip?

Lands

Which lands will be identified for exchange and future development?

What lands are suitable for acquisition?

What lands are available for disposal under a variety of disposal authorities?

Are there areas suitable for right-of-way corridors, avoidance areas, and exclusion areas? What are the general terms and conditions that may apply for these areas?

Are all projected and permitted uses compatible with adjacent landowners?

Landscape Health (Ecological Systems)

What are the desired future conditions of the landscapes on the Arizona Strip?

What is the desired composition and structural stages of the vegetation communities?

What tools will be used to maintain ecological systems within their range of natural variability?

What are the best management tools available for achieving desired vegetation communities and restoration of ecosystems?

Livestock Grazing

What lands are available for livestock grazing?

What guidelines and criteria for future allotment-specific adjustments in permitted use, season of use, or other grazing management practices will be used in order to achieve desired future conditions?

Minerals

Which areas are open to fluid mineral leasing or subject to terms and conditions of the standard lease form?

Which areas are open to fluid mineral leasing subject to minor constraints such as seasonal restrictions?

Which areas are open to fluid mineral leasing subject to major constraints such as no surface occupancy?

Which areas are closed to fluid mineral leasing and whether the closures are discretionary or nondiscretionary?

What are the lease stipulations that apply to areas open to fluid mineral leasing?

Do fluid leasing and development decisions also apply to geophysical exploration?

Which areas are open or closed to the operation of the mining laws, mineral material disposal, and non-energy mineral leasing?

What are the terms, conditions, or other special considerations needed to protect resource values in areas open to the operation of the mining laws, mineral material disposal, and non-energy mineral leasing?

Monument Resources

How do we preserve the remote, undeveloped character, and the wild natural beauty, and protect the objects identified in the Proclamation?

Native American

Are projected and present uses on lands adjacent to reservations on the Arizona Strip compatible with tribal plans and management?

Are places of traditional cultural importance to Native Americans, including sacred sites, adequately addressed?

Have Native Americans identified new issues or concerns to be addressed through land use plan decisions, such as protection of sacred sites or access to them or the need for protecting traditional use areas?

Paleontology

Are areas containing, or likely to contain, vertebrate or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate animal or plant fossils identified?

What are the criteria or site-specific use restrictions used to evaluate these areas prior to disturbance?

Are there significant paleontology resources that could be used for scientific, educational, and recreational purposes or that would warrant use restrictions?

What are management recommendations to promote the scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils?

What are the criteria used for managements recommendations to promote the scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils.

Recreation

What are the kinds and levels of recreational use allowed on the Arizona Strip that will sustain the goals, standards, and objectives of the plan while balancing the public's recreation demands with natural and cultural resource capabilities?

What facilities and infrastructure are needed to provide visitor services and administration of the area's resources?

What methods and criteria will be used to determine the appropriate levels of use or carrying capacity limits for all types of private and commercial recreation use in the planning areas?

Remoteness

What range of recreation opportunities settings should be provided to meet the wide variety of public demand while furthering the purposes of the monuments and retaining the remote nature of the Arizona Strip?

How will motorized and non-motorized routes and uses be managed to:

- 1) reduce or eliminate adverse effects to natural resources and remoteness
- 2) provide appropriate levels and locations of motorized and non-motorized access for recreation and other uses
- 3) further the purposes for which the monuments were created?

Science and Research

How will information gathered through research be used to improve management practices after finalization of the plan? In other words, how can adaptive management using science be incorporated into the plan?

Will the research permit process initiated for the monuments be applied to all of the Arizona Strip?

Socioeconomic

How can future visitor and/or management facilities be situated to more effectively support the economic growth and recreational needs of the local communities?

What provisions will be in place to insure cooperation, consultation, and effective working relationships with local communities, tribes, county, and state agencies, so that economic viability will be enhanced and quality of life on and adjacent to the Arizona Strip is improved?

Soil and Water

Are the Land Health Standards applied, evaluated, and monitored effectively so that soil and water resources are improved or maintained?

Are all hydrographic sub-basins prioritized for management focus according to established criteria?

What are the desired future watershed conditions? What information is needed to develop the desired future watershed conditions?

Special Designations

Do the existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), as presently managed on the Arizona Strip, effectively protect the resources for which each ACEC is designated? Are the goals, standards, and objectives as well as general management practices and uses, including necessary constraints and mitigation measures, for each ACEC sufficient to provide the direction and protection necessary?

Are there additional recommended areas with important cultural or natural resources that should be considered for special designation, such as National Historic or Scenic Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or ACECs that are not in the current GMP or RMP?

Transportation

How will access be maintained for current and projected uses (scientific inquiry, fire management, valid existing rights, management of resources, recreation) without compromising resource conservation and protection or the remoteness and naturalness valued on the Arizona Strip?

How will motorized and mechanical vehicles be managed to reduce or eliminate adverse effects to natural and cultural resources, while providing for a variety of focused, challenging, compatible and mechanized recreation opportunities?

How will motorized and non-motorized routes and uses be managed to:

- 1) reduce or eliminate adverse effects to natural resources and remoteness,
- 2) provide appropriate levels and locations of motorized and non-motorized access for recreation and other uses, and
- 3) further the purposes for which the monuments were created?

Vegetation

What are the desired future conditions for vegetation resources? What are the actions needed to achieve desired vegetation? What management tools best meet future needs (e.g. fire, chemicals, mechanical means)?

What aspects of the ecosystem warrant research to determine the effects of restoration?

Are there special status species that warrant special management of their habitat, other conservation actions and/or designations? What are the strategies to conserve or recover special status species?

Are there actions and area-wide use restrictions needed to achieve desired vegetative conditions?

How will ecosystem restoration in the various ecosystems be prioritized? Are there actions and area-wide use restrictions needed to achieve desired vegetative conditions?

Have priority plant species and habitats been identified for protection or to monitor overall vegetation health?

Visual Resources

How will protection of important and unique scenic values be established and sustained?

How will scenic resources remain accessible for public enjoyment and renewal without such use jeopardizing other important natural values?

Wild and Scenic Rivers

How do we preserve (conserve?) the remote and undeveloped character, the wild natural beauty, and protect the objects identified in the Proclamations?

Wild Horse and Burro

Are the present herd management areas compatible with other resource uses? Are there any recommended changes necessary to protect resources?

Wilderness

What range of recreation opportunity settings should be provided to meet the wide variety of public demand while furthering the purposes of the monuments and retaining the remote nature of the Arizona Strip?

What criteria will be used to address additional wilderness recommendations, considering all other potential uses of the land and protection of the objects identified in the Proclamations, within the current planning context?

Wildlife

Are there special status species that warrant special management of their habitat, other conservation actions and/or designations? What are the strategies to conserve and recover special status species?

What strategies and decisions need to be developed to conserve and recover special status species?

What actions and area wide use restrictions are needed to achieve desired wildlife populations and habitat conditions while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship?

What will be the allowable use levels for key forage species?

Draft Planning Criteria

BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all resource management plans. These criteria are in addition to the planning guidance of the Proclamations, FLMPA, NEPA and NPS Organic Act. Planning criteria ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analysis are avoided. Planning criteria are based on applicable law, agency guidance, public comment, and coordination with other Federal, state and local governments, and Native American Indian tribes.

The planning criteria used in developing the GCPNM plan, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument Plan and the Arizona Strip Resource Management plan are as follows:

- The plans will be completed in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the GCPNM plan will also meet the National Park Service Organic Act requirements. The Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, and other federal law and executive orders and management policies requirements will also be met.
- The two national monument plans will be consistent with their respective proclamations, meeting their purpose, preserving their significance and complimenting their mission goals.
- The plan data and maps will present information in into three divisions representing Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and the remaining lands on the Arizona Strip. The final products will be three separate Records of Decision and three separate stand alone resource management plans.
- Where planning decisions have previously been made that still apply, those decisions will be carried forward into the plans. Plans considered will be the Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan (1992) as amended (Mojave Desert Plan Amendment (1998), Parashant (1997) and Mt. Trumbull (1995) resource conservation area plans.
- The land use plan will be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource related plans, policies and programs of other Federal agencies, State and local governments and Indian tribes, so long as their plans, policies and programs are consistent with the purposes, policies and programs of Federal laws and regulations.
- Cooperating Agency status will be encouraged for affected Federal, State and local governments and Indian tribes. The environmental analysis input and proposals of Cooperating Agencies will be used to the maximum extent possible consistent with BLM and NPS responsibilities (43 CFR 1501.6 (a) (2)).

- A science based adaptive management approach will be used in developing plan decisions. Using the best science available and monitoring plan objectives in light of established thresholds, plan decisions will be modified when needed to meet stated objectives.

- The plan will emphasize ecological restoration and preservation of historic resources. It will identify opportunities and priorities for research and monitoring related to the key resources values of the two national monuments.

- The plan will incorporate for all activities the statewide rangeland health standards, established by the Arizona Resource Advisory Council and approved by the Secretary of Interior.

- The existing BLM wilderness inventory, route inventory, citizen proposals, other resource values and need for inclusion of the lands in the National Wilderness preservation system will be considered when proposing new wilderness study areas. Wilderness inventory will be conducted consistent with BLM inventory guidelines and the BLM Wilderness Inventory Handbook. Wilderness Study Areas, if recommended and designated under authority of FLPMA, section 202, will be managed in accordance with Interim Management Policy.

- The plan will address transportation and access. Route inventories will be completed for both monuments and will be used as baseline data for planning. Lands within the monuments will be designated as "limited" or "closed" and a map showing the transportation network of roads and trails will be set forth in the land use plan. Transportation and access on the Arizona Strip lands outside the two monuments will be designated as either "open," "limited" or "closed." However, a map showing a network of roads and trails will be deferred for later planning.

- The plan will directly involve Native American Indian tribal governments by providing strategies for the protection of recognized traditional uses and sites.

- The lifestyles of area residents, including the activities of grazing and hunting, will be recognized in the plan. Much of the Strip's historic value is connected with ranching operations, both past and present. Vintage ranching structures and facilities hold great historical and social significance and will be incorporated into the plan.

- The plan will not address boundary adjustments consistent with the Secretary of Interior's decision.

Special Designations

These are the special designations currently on the Arizona Strip. The planning effort will not change the national monuments, existing wilderness areas, or any sites presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Additional wilderness areas will be considered. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) will be reviewed, particularly in light of monument protection. Some may be deleted and some may be added. And boundaries of some ACEC's may change.

National Monuments

Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, January 11, 2000
Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, November 9, 2000

Wilderness Areas (Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984)

Beaver Dam (15,100 acres)
Cottonwood Point (6,900 acres)
Grand Wash Cliffs (37,000 acres)
Kanab Creek (6,700 acres)
Mt. Logan (14,600 acres)
Mt. Trumbull (7,900 acres)
Paiute (88,000 acres)
Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs (89,400 acres)

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Virgin River is suitable for designation and recommended as a study river under Section 5(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The Paria River is suitable for designation.

National Historic Trails

None of these trails have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. All qualify for listing.

Dominguez/Escalante Historic Trail (ASFO)
Jedediah Smith Historic Trail (ASFO)
Old Arizona Road/Honeymoon Trail (ASFO and VCNM)
Temple Trail (ASFO and GCPNM)

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The following table lists all the current Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) on the Arizona Strip.

Table 5. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

ACEC	Acreage	Values
Beaver Dam Slope	20,800	Desert Tortoise
Ft. Pierce	900	Endangered species, critical watershed
Johnson Spring	17,700	Endangered species, cultural
Little Black Mountain	200	Cultural
Lost Spring Mountain	9,800	Cultural, endangered species
Marble Canyon	10,700	Endangered species, raptors, scenic
Moonshine Ridge	5,500	Endangered species, cultural
Nampaweap	550	Cultural
Virgin River Corridor	8,100	Riparian, endangered fish, scenic
Witch Pool	260	Cultural

Data Summary and Data Gaps

The following table summarizes the GIS data development for the planning effort at the present time.

The data gap summary is a review of the major categories in the public scoping comments database (see Table 6), including discussions with some of the resource specialists responsible for other scoping categories. The following conclusions were reached based on the public's perception of the planning process and what is needed, in terms of data, to adequately address their concerns.

Table 6. Data Development Summary

Data Set	Available		Scale	Status
	Yes	No		
Lands and Base Data				
Land Ownership	X		100K	Done (but needs vertical integration - ETD completed mid-September 2002)
Transportation - Parashant	X		24K	Complete
Transportation - Vermilion Cliffs	X		24K	Done by end of October 2002
Transportation - Public Domain	X		24K	Not field verified, no ETD (Enterprise Team will be working in this area)
Aerial Photography (DOQQ)	X		24K	Done
Digital Raster Graphs (topos)	X		24K, 100K, 250K	Done
Aerial Photography (Hard Copy)		X	24K	Done
Public Land Survey System	X		24K, 100K	Done
Areas of Critical Env. Concern (ACEC)	X		100K	ETD mid-late September 2002
Rights of Ways	X		100K	85% complete
Subsurface ownership		X	100K	Need to verify 100k Mineral Maps
Mining Claims		X	100K	Under development
Oil and Gas Leases		X	100K	Need to verify
Monument Boundaries	X		24K	Done
Wilderness Boundaries	X		24K	Done
Political Boundaries	X		100K	Done
Wildlife				
Bighorn Sheep Habitat	X		100K	Done (need to convert to coverage)
Mule Deer Habitat	X		100K	Done (need to convert to coverage)
Pronghorn Habitat	X		100K	Done (need to convert to coverage)
SWWFL Habitat	X		100K	Need to compile & convert to coverage
Peregrine Falcon Habitat		X	100K	Needs to be created in the future

Desert Tortoise Habitat	X		100K	Talk with specialists
Kangaroo Rat Habitat	X		100K	Done (need to convert to coverage)
Data Set	Available		Scale	Status
	Yes	No		
Wildlife				
Mexican Spotted Owl Habitat		X	100K	Talk to specialist
Wildlife Travel Corridors		X	100K	Need to develop
Wildlife Hotspots		X	100K	Need to develop
Wildlife buffer zones		X	100K	Need to develop
Game Management Units	X		100K	Done
Misc. Habitat (from WERC)		X	100K	Need to acquire
Range				
Grazing Allotments	X		100K	Need to verify
Pastures	X		100K	Need to verify & add to allotments
Range Improvement (point features)	X		24K	Plots have been given; need to verify
Range Improvement (line features)	X		24K	Need to verify
Vegetation				
GAP data	X		100K	Best we currently have (only 58.8% accurate) - see Wilderness Co. work
Noxious Weeds	X		24K	Done
T&E Plant Species	X		24K	90% done
Vegetation Treatments		X	24K	20% done; need verification from Range
Ponderosa Pine stands	X		24K	Done (per GIS Review)
Pinyon-Juniper Stands	X		24K	Done (per GIS Review)
Soils and Geology				
NRCS Soils Data	X		24K	Complete but lacks SUURGO certification
Geology (small scale)	X		250K	Complete

Geology (large scale)	X		100K, 24K	Have all that is available
Geologic Hazards	X		100K	Not yet acquired
Data Set	Available		Scale	Status
	Yes	No		
Fire				
Fire Management Categories	X		100K	Done (need to convert to coverage)
Fire Management Zones	X		100K	Done (need to convert to coverage)
Fire Occurrence (polygons)	X		100K	Requires compilation and verification
Fire Occurrence (points)	X		100K	Requires compilation and verification
Prescribed Fires	X		100K	Done (need to convert to coverage)
Military Training Routes	X		100K	Need to compile & verify
Military Operating Areas	X		100K	Need to compile & verify
Recreation				
Historic Trails	X		24K	Done
Hiking Trails	X		24K	Done
Mountain Bike Trails		X	24K	Done
OHV Trails		X	24K	Part of route inventory
OHV Classes	X		24K	Need to redraw lines
Trailheads	X		24K	Done
Fee Sites	X		24K	60% done
Traffic Counters	X		24K	60% done
ROS Inventory	X		24K	Need to develop
Sign Locations	X		24K	Need to be inventoried
Scenic Overlooks	X		24K	60% done
Information Stations/Kiosks		X	24K	60% done
Campgrounds (official)	X		24K	Done
Camp Sites (Human Impact)	X		24K	Done
Scenic Highways/Byways		X	24K	Need to be developed

WSA/WIU Inventory		X	24K	ETD mid-September
Utilities and Other Infrastructure				
Power Lines	X		100K	Needs to be developed
Communication Repeaters	X		24K	Done
Air Strips		X	24K	Needs to be created ?
Data Set	Available		Scale	Status
	Yes	No		
Utilities and Other Infrastructure				
Gas Lines		X	24K	Not yet acquired
Hydrography				
Major water bodies	X		100K	Needs to be compiled & verified
Major rivers and tributaries	X		100K	Needs to be compiled & verified
Floodplain Data	X		24K	Need to acquire new 24k info
HUCS	X		100K	Complete
Streams and Drainages	X		24K	Needs to be compiled & verified
Cultural				
Archaeological Sites		X	24K	Needs to be plotted & verified
Archaeological Inventories		X	24K	Needs to be plotted & verified
Historic Sites		X	24K	Yet to be developed
Paleontological Sites		X	24K	Yet to be developed or acquired
Weather				
Precipitation		X	100 K	Need to acquire
RAWS Trend Data		X	100 K	Need to acquire
Temperature		X	100 K	Need to acquire

None of the data gaps that have been identified by public comments came as a surprise. Each data gap listed below is described in detail in the Scoping Categories section below. It should be noted that many of the gaps listed are partial gaps only, as several of them are currently under development. It is important to note that although this data gap list was derived from all of the Scoping Categories, many of the gaps listed showed up in multiple categories. Because of this,

and for the sake of brevity, the scoping category was used that either best addressed that particular data gap, or contained the most references to it.

Data Gap List

1. Route Inventory
2. Wilderness Inventory
3. Off-Road vehicle plan
4. Cultural / Historic
5. Visual Resource Management (VRM)
6. Vegetation
7. Eco-regions
8. Rangeland Health
9. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)
10. Public Maps
11. Native American Place Names
12. Minerals / Oil and Gas

Planning Questions

There are no planning questions that are raised by the data gaps listed above. However, the questions that resource specialists need answered cannot be adequately addressed until these data gaps are filled.

Scoping Categories

Wilderness

Wilderness was one of the two largest categories in the database and the comments tended to run either from one extreme (no more wilderness) to the other (make it all wilderness). While there were some comments that could be considered middle of the road, the general trend was to one side or the other. The data gaps here are obvious. Wilderness and transportation are inextricably linked. If you have one, you can't have the other. The data needed to answer the majority of wilderness issues are:

- **Transportation:** the route inventory is only complete within the GCPNM. The remainder of the ASFO and the VCNM has only a partial amount of verified routes. It is likely that the inventory will be completed in the VCNM but unlikely that it will be finished on the remainder of the ASFO. The lack of route verification on the ASFO will continue to be a data gap.
- **Wilderness Inventory:** Conversion of the previous wilderness inventory ('79-'80) into digital format is in process. Since this is the inventory of record, it will be the basis for many decisions. On-the-ground inventory is currently being conducted, but will only cover a fraction of the lands on the ASFO. Lack of an up-to-date inventory is not considered a data gap since the inventory of record is still valid. Several comments indicated that a complete re-inventory should be conducted.

Transportation

Transportation was the other of the two largest categories in the database. Again, the many comments were split between unlimited access and road closures. However, many comments stressed the need to have a viable transportation plan.

- **Route Inventory:** The route inventory is only complete within the GCPNM. The remainder of the ASFO and the VCNM has only a partial amount of verified routes. It is likely that the inventory in the VCNM will be completed but unlikely that it will be finish on the remainder of the ASFO. The lack of route verification on the ASFO will continue to be a data gap.
- **ATV Use:** The other data gap that showed up in this category is the lack of an ATV plan. A large number of the comments in this category expressed concern about ATV use. The planning process will not be considered complete without addressing this issue.

Monument Resources

While the majority of the comments in this section appeared to come from a form letter that talked about protecting everything mentioned in the Presidential Proclamation, many of the other comments addressed the same concerns.

- **Cultural / Historic:** A significant data gap that appears in this category is the cultural/historic data. This is also a resource addressed in the proclamation.
- **VRM:** Another data gap that shows up in this category is scenery. There were a significant number of comments that expressed concern about the need to preserve view sheds. This highlights the need to update our VRM data.

General Query

While this was a large category, no data gaps were identified that were not addressed more specifically in other, more detailed categories.

NEPA – Planning

While this was a large category, no data gaps were identified that were not addressed more specifically in other, more detailed categories.

Biological Resources

While the majority of the comments in this section appeared to come from a form letter that talked about the protection of biodiversity, as well as ecosystem and landscape health, this identified one major data gap, that of vegetation.

- **Vegetation:** The lack of quality vegetation data is a data gap that shows up any time biodiversity is mentioned.

Livestock Grazing

This category was another controversial one, with comments on both sides of the grazing debate. It also pointed out two data gaps previously missed.

- **Ecoregions:** This data gap is directly tied to vegetation, but eco-regions can be identified without the use of detailed vegetation data. What identified this gap was the concern over grazing in the Mojave Desert region and the potential impacts on the desert tortoise.
- **Rangeland Health:** Currently there is no spatial data that displays rangeland health. This data exists in the range staff's records and could be potentially valuable as a management tool. While it is unlikely time will be available to develop this data for the planning effort, it's real value would be as an implementation tool after the plan is complete.

Recreation

This category was one that is hard to quantify in terms of data gaps. This is mostly due to the sheer size of the landscape and the diversity of recreation opportunities it provides. However, one data gap which comes to mind is the lack of spatial information about what recreation is occurring, where it is occurring, and to what extent it is occurring.

- **Recreation Opportunity Spectrum:** The majority of recreation questions can be addressed by the development of an updated Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) data set.
- **Public maps:** A lot of comments referred to specific recreational activities. One data gap is a lack of activity specific visitor maps. While maps of this type will be a natural outcome of the planning process, having an interim set of maps may be worth considering.

Native American Concerns

All of the comments in this category addressed the need to include Native Americans in the planning process. We currently have no spatial data, other than reservation boundaries, that portray Native American resources.

- **Native American Place Names:** One of the ways to incorporate Native American heritage into the planning effort has already been discussed, although no details have been agreed upon. By including Native American place names into our geographic database, this portion of their culture will be preserved electronically.
- **Historic Tribal Areas:** Another possibility is to include a historic map indicating band and tribal territories on the Arizona Strip at the time of Euro-american contact in the 1800s.

Minerals

This is another polarized category consisting mostly of comments that were either in favor of or against mineral/oil and gas extraction.

- **Minerals, mining claims, oil and gas development:** This information is considered crucial to respond to citizen comments. Because of the protection afforded the monuments in the proclamation, this places more pressure on the remainder of the public lands within the ASFO.

Future Steps

The Arizona Strip planning effort will be completed by fall of 2005. Attached is the planning schedule (Table 7).

Table 7. Arizona Strip Planning Schedule

Publish Notice of Intent in Federal Register	April 24, 2002
Analyze Input/Assemble Available Data Relative to Issues	March 2001 - 2002
Community Based Partnership Courses	May - December 2001, January -March 2002
Hold Public Scoping Meeting Open Houses	May - June 2002
Scoping Report	September 2002
Planning Criteria compiled and reviewed	June - August 2002
Gather and Analyze New Data Where Necessary	2001-2003
Formulate alternatives	September 1, 2002 - January 31, 2003
Write the Draft Plan/EIS	November 1, 2002 - July 31, 2003
Print Internal Review Copies and Deliver (4_5 weeks)	August - September 2003
Internal Review Draft Plan/EIS, Comment Period (30 days)	October 2003
Analyze Comments, Revise, Print and Mail Draft Plan/EIS (12 weeks)	November 2003 - February 2004
Public Comment Period on the Draft Plan/EIS (90 days)	April 2004 - June 2004
Analyze Comments, Revise and Finalize Plan/EIS	July - December 2004
Print Internal Review Copies and Deliver	January 2005
Internal Review of Final Plan/EIS (4 weeks)	February 2005
Revise, Print, Mail Final Plan/EIS	March - June 2005
Governor's Consistency Review	July - August 2005
Publish Final Plan/EIS, Record of Decision and Presentation Plan	October - December 2005

Web page and electronic communication

The general Arizona BLM web page contains planning information for all land use plans in the state, including the Arizona Strip at www.az.blm.gov/fr_lup.htm. We also have information on the Arizona Strip Field Office website at www.az.blm.gov/asfo/index.htm and the NPS website at www.nps.gov/para with general planning information and hot links to the monument proclamations. Planning Updates or Bulletins, planning schedule, reports, and additional information generated during the planning effort will be placed or updated on these websites.

There are currently 2300 names or organizations on the National Mailing List for the Arizona Strip planning effort. At least 1700 of them have email addresses. All future information, such as references to future Planning Bulletins, will be sent electronically whenever possible. The only hard copies mailed out to the public will be those for whom no email addresses are known.

Planning Bulletins

The first Arizona Strip Planning Update was published and mailed in mid-May of 2002. It contained the scoping questions and scoping meeting schedule (See Appendix 2). Plans are for approximately 2-3 planning bulletins each year to be printed and mailed as the planning effort progresses. These will be posted on the websites and should keep the public aware of the planning progress.

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